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The  
German People  
versus  
Hitler





The  
German People  
versus  
Hitler

By  
HEINRICH FRAENKEL

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WOKING

## PREFACE

To-day more than ever, interest is ripe and passions are roused as to what is to become of Germany and the German people after the downfall of the Nazi regime. A great deal is being written and even more is being argued about it; but many of these arguments seem to be futile because they are based on individual hopes and wishful thinking rather than the essential premise of any argument on that subject: exact knowledge of the real conditions within Germany and of the German people's attitude.

Some such knowledge this book hopes to supply; it does not wish to state, let alone plead, anybody's or any Party's case; it merely attempts, on what documentary evidence has been available, to show the living conditions in various strata of the German people; it tries to gauge the oppositional temper and activities that have become manifest in seven years of Nazi rule; it attempts to explain the genesis and existence of that rule and the inevitability of its downfall.

Beyond this one prediction, the book has no prophetic aspirations whatever. The readers will have to draw most of their own conclusions from the facts and data accumulated; but if these should contribute towards a clearer understanding of the real conditions in which the German people is struggling for its own liberty and for the right to shape its own destiny, then this book will have served its purpose.

There remains the pleasant task of tendering thanks to those who have so kindly helped me: to Mrs. Dorothy Buxton, whose advice and library has been invaluable for the Church chapters; to Maurice Fry and Fritz Gottfurcht for welcome suggestions; to the Editor of *Time and Tide*

## PREFACE

for the kind permission to use material published under my *nom de plume* "Cinna"; and last but by no means least to Malcolm Barnes for the infinite patience he applied to the herculean task of purging my sins against English construction, grammar and spelling.

H. F.

*January 1940*

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# Part One

## BACKGROUND





## CHAPTER ONE

# The Historical Background

Let it be said at the outset that one of the objects of this book is to help to destroy the fallacies rampant throughout the civilized world regarding the Third Reich. The foremost of these fallacies is the identification of Germany and the Third Reich, Germanism and Nazism, the German people and the Nazi Party.

Nothing of this is true. In fact, the vast majority of the German people is opposed to the regime, either actively or contemplatively, but in any case (as regards those within the boundaries of the Reich) secretly. Those in active opposition do their work at the constant risk of their lives and liberty. Numerically the active Opposition is necessarily a minority. Yet, those active "underground" fighters against Nazi rule are the vanguard of the future Germany; they extend, on the one hand, to the ranks of Conservatives, and the Liberal intellectuals, and on the other hand to the still intact, even though underground, socialist organizations of the workers. They include staunch Catholics as well as fanatically courageous Protestant pastors and their adherents.

It is a motley crowd that vanguard. Its components individually are worlds apart in tradition and faith, but they have two things in common: an undying hatred of Nazism and a resolute will to destroy it.

But what of the rest: those in opposition, but either too careful or too indolent to show activity? They are to be

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found in all strata of the population: in the army, in the civil service, and in the very heart of various Nazi organizations, in the ranks of the Storm-troopers and high up in the party hierarchy. There are many who for years have been paying lip-service to the Nazi creed: some with their tongues in their cheeks, some just because they could not avoid it, some from sheer personal opportunism, some because they found it the shrewdest and least dangerous way to serve their real interests and ideals. Moreover, quite a few of those comfortably tucked away in some party job among the Storm-troops or in the administration are very near to active opposition, even if more secretly than those outside the Party. Not to confuse them with the myriads of stoolpigeons and spies of the Gestapo is often a problem for the active opposition.

As to the masses, that "vast majority of the population" which I claimed to be opposed to the regime, how does such a statement square with the 98 per cent "voting" results staged by Göbbels' propaganda machine, from time to time, in favour of Hitler's policy? It does not square at all; but since, later in this book, there will be well-substantiated facts as to how polling is engineered in a totalitarian State, we need not go into details here. The fact remains that all those "election figures," either faked or obtained by sheer terrorism, do not mean a thing. The only sound way, to-day, of obtaining a true picture of the mood of the German people is to establish personal contact with a score, nay hundreds of them, from all social strata, which is easy, to gain their confidence, which is difficult, and to make them talk, which is most difficult of all. For people in Germany to-day are very shy of talking politics, and when they do they have a way of looking back over their shoulders lest a third party might be listening.

With the exception of a very small minority directly

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profiting from the regime, the great masses are bitterly opposed to it. They would much prefer butter to guns, and white bread and a regular meat supply to glittering parades and fiery speeches. But they bear it all silently and they dare not grumble, except in strict privacy. They think that anyway there is nothing to be done, though they never abandon the hope that someone else, some time, might do something about it.

• All very well—the sceptical reader will reply—no doubt there is some opposition, though goodness knows how much. Granted that polling figures under a dictatorship are so much eyewash; let us even admit that the pictures of a hundred thousand outstretched hands and the sound of a hundred thousand raucous shouts of “One Reich, one People, one Leader,” that all this, impressive though it seems, is nothing but clever stage management and not necessarily a pointer to the real mood of the millions who stay away from the glittering parades. Let all this be granted; but is it not incontestable that Hitler, while still in opposition, did build up an ever increasing following of millions, until he was ready to seize power by an almost bloodless revolution, with the majority of the people enthusiastically behind him? And even if, at that time, it was but a small majority, say just over half of the population, has he not, since then, gone from strength to strength? Has he not achieved all that he set out to achieve and more, particularly in foreign politics? And since nothing succeeds so well as success, is it not reasonable to assume that to-day his genuine following really must be a considerable majority of the population?

This, roughly, is the reasoning of the sceptical reader in England (and elsewhere). It sounds logical enough, and yet the statement is full of fallacies. Take, for instance, the statement that Hitler had a majority, however slight, when

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he seized power by an almost bloodless revolution. This statement alone contains as many as four fallacies: (i) he did not have a majority, however slight; (ii) he never seized power, but he gained second place by barter, and crept into first place by trickery; (iii) there never was anything which, by the widest stretch of the imagination, one might call a revolution; (iv) whatever one might call it, it certainly was (and still is) far from bloodless.

But before elucidating and substantiating these points, we must make a quick survey of the Nazi movement during the fourteen years before it came to power. This has been much romanticized as the miracle of a humble man carrying in his mind the plan for a millennium, and six equally humble men, penniless and without influence, armed with nothing but his great idea and the power of his tongue, setting out to conquer the soul of a great people! A fallacy too, and all the more dangerous, because, very superficially, there is an element of truth in it.

It is perfectly true that Adolf Hitler in 1919 acquired membership number seven of a "party" founded by one Anton Drechsler, one Harrer, and four others, all of them pathetic beer-hall politicians with not an idea in their heads, all of them fifth-rate soap-box orators, all of them now forgotten; for gratitude never was a strong point with Hitler.

It is equally true that member No. 7 of that ludicrous *Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei* (with the equivalent of about three and sixpence in its till) transformed it into that *Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiter Partei* through which he is now ruling the Reich and wielding the greatest political power in Europe.

It is equally true that neither the "Hitler-Salute" nor the Swastika was a new idea; nor was the party programme, nor the very name of the new movement. In fact, it was not

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a new movement at all, but just a scrambling of the ideas of Schönerer, Gobineau, Schwaner, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and several other people. As to the "Party Programme," it is full of the weirdest nonsense and contradictions, and practically the only point adhered to through all the years of the struggle for power and the wielding of power was the extermination of the Jews.

To understand Hitler's rise in the five years prior to his first bid and inglorious failure in the "Beer-Hall" Putsch of November 1923, and to know what created the basis of the present threat to the world's civilization, the reader must be fully aware of the mood of the German people during and immediately after the last world-war. This may seem far afield for a book which deals with the most desperately urgent problem of the present and the immediate future, that is, with whatever, in a world-war, the civilized world has to hope for from the German people as its potentially greatest and most powerful ally,—probably the problem which will decide the issue. Yet we cannot hope to understand the forces and chances of the present German Opposition so long as we do not know what it has to contend with, so long as we are not aware of the ideological and material background and the origin of the forces that have come to rule in Germany. How, then, did it all happen?

In 1914 the overwhelming majority of the German people went to war honestly believing that they were encircled and wilfully attacked by a world of envious enemies, and that they were fighting for the most just of all causes—freedom and independence. With the bitter end came for many (though by no means for all) the grim realization, and the unspeakable disillusionment, that all their incredible suffering, bravery and heroism had been in vain, in so far as they had lost the war materially; but further, that it had been futile, utterly senseless, and even criminal, because it

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was now clear to them they had fought for a cause far from just.

It is emphasized, however, that such bitter disillusionment did not come to *all* Germans. This is a qualification of the utmost importance in the light of subsequent events. I am speaking of the famous *Dolchstoß-Legende*, the legend of the "dagger thrust in the back." With that we shall deal a little later. First of all we have on November 9, 1918, what is commonly called the Socialist Revolution that ended the war. It was nothing of the kind. Actually there has never yet been a revolution in Germany, neither in 1848, nor in 1918, least of all in 1933. The Germans are far too tidy and orderly a people to care much for revolutions; even the famous *furor teutonicus* has at all times expressed itself in a far from revolutionary manner. (In fact, there is little room for hatred in the German character; the average German is extremely good-natured and docile, ponderous rather than agile, and combining considerable diligence and an orderly practical mind with much sentiment and fondness for metaphysical abstraction. Whatever arrogance there is (a Prussian rather than one of the larger German characteristics) is generally due to what we might call a national inferiority complex.)

There has never yet been a revolution in Germany, for the simple reason that, up to 1933 anyway, Germans never knew how to hate. To be a revolutionary one must have learned how to hate. Many millions of Germans have, meanwhile, learned it. There is now in Germany more accumulated and repressed hatred than there has ever been, at any time, in any equally large community. Repressed hatred is one of the most dangerous of explosives, and this one must, of necessity, lead to the first real revolution of the German people.

But to return to November 1918—if that was not a

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revolution, what was it? The truth is this: In their last gigantic gambler's throw, the German Army Command had staked everything and lost. Ludendorff deserted to Sweden, the Kaiser to Holland. The entire ruling clique shirked its responsibility. Someone had to carry on. So there followed a Social-Democratic Government, which was about as well equipped for office as Shakespeare's Christopher Sly was for entertaining his lordship's guests. Never in history had so great an opportunity found so mediocre an instrument: those worthy trade union officials, grown grey and stout with decades of sitting on parliamentary benches and office stools, staid bureaucrats who had, all their lifetime, preached the faith of evolution rather than revolution. They had made so many speeches to the effect that we had only to wait for Socialism to fall into our laps like a ripe apple that, when this actually came to pass, all they could do was to pretend that nothing had happened, so that they could go on waiting. They blundered on to a horse without knowing the first thing about how to ride one, and those who did know forthwith took up the reins again and led them up the garden path.

The German Reich, with very short interruptions, was always ruled by Junkers, Prussian Squires and Rhenish Industrialists. One of these short interruptions took place in that November of 1918. It was very short indeed, hardly more than a few weeks. It took no longer than that for the ex-rulers to realize that they need stay no longer in the funk-holes whither they had scattered with such unseemly haste, and whence they came back, heads erect and with more swagger than ever. Even Ludendorff could dispense with the blue spectacles he had considered expedient when creeping away to Sweden; he came back in glittering uniform, medal-spangled and fêted as the most glorious and victorious general of the world-war. For by then the



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*Dolchstoss-Legende* had been born, that famous legend of how the German army, after an uninterrupted series of victories, was just about to administer the *coup de grâce* to the crumpling allied forces, when the generals were robbed of their well-earned triumph by a "dagger thrust in the back"—the base treason of Marxists and Jews who had disintegrated and poisoned the morale of the German soldiers. In actual fact there was not so much about the Jews in the original *Dolchstoss-Legende*; that was one of Hitler's later improvements to the story.

No one who has not fully grasped the "dagger thrust legend" and its implications can even begin to understand the growth of Hitlerism and the subsequent events in Germany. But one may well ask how the generals could have got away with such a story, since only a few weeks earlier Ludendorff had sent out his famous S O S to the effect that the German army could not hold another day, and Hindenburg had urged that, under any circumstances and at any terms, an Armistice must be arranged at once. How, therefore, could the people of Germany be taken in by such impudent faking of historical facts?

It is, however, not so difficult to understand. Try and imagine yourself in the shoes of the average German of that time. For more than four years the war had been going on. Your own and your family's sacrifices and sufferings have been enormous, but every second day, on an average, the church bells have been ringing another victory, either in France or in Russia or even afar off in Rumania. Millions of square miles have been gloriously conquered and held by the invincible armies. All those years an entire wall of your drawing-room has been plastered with maps, all of them of enemy countries and all studded with little flags demarking the various fronts; almost every day you have had your hands full pushing those little flags forward,

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further and further into enemy territory. Only a week or so ago the process went on, when the last news came through of Ludendorff's gigantic offensive in France. Since then there has been silence; but, then, you cannot win every single day, can you? Then suddenly collapse, catastrophe, surrender! Impossible! It cannot be true! It is not true! The German armies are marching back home in perfect order! Unbeaten! But why? True, your diet lately has been almost exclusively of turnips and barley soup; but you could have stood it a little longer. Why is the enemy, beaten in the field over and over again, suddenly on top? There must be some magic in it, witchcraft! It is very fishy indeed, to say the very least.)

Is it so astonishing that in these circumstances many Germans, desperately clinging to the remnants of self-respect, should have listened to the sweet and soothing tune of the dagger-thrust legend?<sup>1</sup> It is certainly not astonishing, all the less so as, in those very months, the folly of Versailles was being perpetrated. There was the cradle of Hitlerism; thence flowed, for years to come, the food of Nazidom, an inexhaustible supply to overcome the growing-pains of Hitler's movement.

Try and picture the Germany of those first years after the war. Not enough food to go round, nor cloth, nor, in fact, any commodity. (The children undernourished, the women worried, the menfolk loafing around in ill-cut civilian suits of military field-grey. Dire poverty in the working classes and, in contrast, the craziest luxuries of the *Schieber* (from all classes), profiteering in stolen army stores and helped by the rising inflation of the currency that was

<sup>1</sup> It should be borne in mind, though, that the "dagger thrust legend," far from springing up all at once, was made to grow on the people almost imperceptibly, and the further the war receded into the past, the better grew and blossomed that legend.

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steadily undermining every kind of middle-class security and all former values, material and otherwise.

Millions of men back from the war and finding it hard to recover their former jobs or find new ones, or generally to readjust themselves to civilian life. Hundreds of thousands of them did not even try: young men in their early or middle twenties who had gone to the war as schoolboys and who had come back, according to their social status, either as sergeants or captains, but in any case loath to start all over again at swotting on college benches or taking orders from major office boys or junior clerks. Soldiering was all they had learned, soldiering was all they wanted, so they went out to the Baltic regions or elsewhere, where they could do some fighting against the Bolsheviks. Those who could not be accommodated in that way joined one of the innumerable "Free Corps" that grew up all over Germany, sustained by some of the large wealthy Junker Estates, careering around the countryside, pillaging, marauding, and full of vague ideas about resuscitating national honour by killing off a few "Pollaks" or "Yids" or "Bolshies."

This was the nucleus of Hitler's future army of Brown-shirts and Black Guards, though at that time, of course, Hitler himself was still a nobody. In those early years it was the *Freikorps* leaders who were cutting a dash: Rossbach, Reinhard, Lützow, Escherich, Killinger, and many others. Useful "names" were lent to the movement by Ludendorf, v. Reventlow, v. Gräfe, and others, while arms and ammunition, even more useful, were supplied from secret Reichswehr stores, carefully hidden from the Inter-Allied Commissions who were supposed to see that the country was properly disarmed, in accordance with the Versailles Treaty. Had that Treaty been imbued with somewhat more consideration for a proud and virile nation's

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susceptibilities; then all that underhand arms-traffic and all the trouble connected with it would have been avoided. It is true that all that *Freikorps* business might have impressed responsible foreign statesmen and soldiers as being nothing more than little boys playing "robbers and coppers," yet it was from these quarters, before and after the half-baked Kapp-Putsch, and right up to Hitler's equally abortive "Beer-Hall Putsch" four years later, it was exactly from these quarters that came the murderers of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Walter Rathenau, of Erzberger, Eisner, Landauer, Maximilian Harden, and many others. Not one of these murderers was ever punished and many of them are now enjoying high honours in the Third Reich.

But let us return to that day in 1919 when the Third Reich was still afar off, to that day when one Adolf Hitler, an insignificant Reichswehr subordinate, joined that ludicrous six-men-party, surely the most insignificant one of the many groups and parties then representing nationalist and "folk" aims. It was not quite as insignificant a few days later when that new member, No. 7, had made his first public speech and increased the membership almost to a hundred. It was on that day that Party-member No. 7 discovered that he was an orator. It turned out to be a most important discovery.

True, of course, that neither then, nor even years later, was the new man and his party taken quite seriously by the real big-shots of the nationalist movement to whom he would scrape and bow with his awkward manners, his ill-fitting raincoat, his funny moustache, and the interminably rambling speeches which, even in private conversation, were (and still are) his only mode of expression. Yet, put him on a platform and he could certainly pull them in and hold them; a mighty useful man.

What manner of men were the leaders of the numerous

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"nationalist" parties and movements which in those years formed the Opposition in Germany? Does that statement signify that the Government itself did not love its country, that it was "anti-national" and that its members were traitors? Certainly not; though the Opposition loudly declared it to be so. The simple truth of the matter was that the Government, that endless sequence of all sorts of coalitions, was (with one or two exceptions) just weak and undecisive. The Opposition in the Germany of those years had a very easy life. Considering that the majority of the population consisted of malcontents, and that for many years there was perfectly good ground to find fault with almost everything, the Opposition simply had to say so, and in that freest of all democracies they certainly were not prevented from saying so as loudly as they liked.

Much of the fault, of course, lay with the Western Powers. Had they, as an act of grace, shown the weak, well-meaning, struggling and far from militant Germany of those years only one tithe of the consideration subsequently shown the Third Reich under duress, or rather under the most impudent bluff and bluster in history, things would have taken a very different turn, and Europe now, instead of heading for catastrophe, would be really appeased.

It would, indeed, be more than futile to give this statement even a few lines, but for the fact that this attitude, particularly when it came to the occupation of the Ruhr, played an immensely important part in fostering the deplorable spirit which is now a menace to the world. Anyway, in fairness to the "nationalist" movement of the time, it cannot be denied that many of their grievances were perfectly justified, though most of the "nationalists" did not scruple to use the fire of public indignation mainly for cooking their own party-stew on the very false and unfair pretext that, having a sort of exclusive lease on patriotism, they

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were the only Party that had the fatherland's interests at heart.

As to the social and financial upper strata of the movement, all they wanted was the return of the privileges that were theirs in Imperial Germany, not necessarily under Wilhelm, but preferably under one of the younger generation of the Hohenzollerns. But this was, in any case, a point of secondary importance; the main point was to have a proper army once more and thus to secure fat orders for the armaments industry and a plentiful supply of decent jobs with quick promotion for all those poor chaps who were now a constant drain on the pockets of their well-to-do relatives on Prussian country estates or in Rhenish industry. It was important, too, to have a strong and right-thinking Government that would keep the workers under control and stand no such nonsense as wage-strikes, forty-hour weeks, social welfare, and all that sort of dividend-draining sentiment. To achieve these ends, one might as well let that fellow Hitler have some money to feed his Brownshirts with; they were a steadily growing army and might be quite useful one of these days, provided that man Hitler was kept properly under control and made to forget those crazy "socialist" ideas in his Party Programme.

In point of fact Hitler never did have a cut-and-dried programme except in foreign politics; to this you can refer in *Mein Kampf*, and he has more or less adhered to it (with the exception that, on second thoughts, he has added Colonial aspirations).

But in home politics, and particularly during the years of his struggle for power, Hitler has never been anything but the perfect demagogue, has never uttered a really constructive idea, has never done anything but lash out most viciously at his adversaries. Here, indeed, was one of the secrets of his success. He lashed out against the "Novem-

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ber Criminals" (the poor fools who had to clear away the mess left by his own noble supporters), he lashed out against the Freemasons, the Jews, the Catholics—but not so much against the latter during the years of his struggle, or he might never have reached power. But the Jews were always his most useful stand-by, whenever there was no other lashing to be done. Had there been no Jews in Germany, Hitler would have had to invent them. A non-lashing Hitler in a perfectly appeased world is unthinkable—that is why the world will never find peace, so long as Hitler is a power to reckon with. Hitler thrives on strife and has always been particularly shrewd in appealing most frantically to that streak in the German character generally called "national persecution mania," a phenomenon which could, of course, be easily explained if not justified, on historical as well as geographical grounds.

Hitler is a master in the art of showmanship. This is one of the few positive reasons for his amazing success. The principal reasons were negative: the folly of Versailles, and the weakness of the poor and unimaginative Governments which, particularly in the first years, ruled the young German Republic. They were, most of them, run by old Trade Union officials who had been sitting on their political mission for so many decades that they never thought of acquainting the people with it, other than by decrees or perhaps a leading article in the Party organ, which was never read by those they should have sought to win over.

The young Republic's rulers were weary old petty-bourgeois, without enthusiasm or imagination. They had the chance of a century, and they lost it. They had it in their power to make Europe's most numerous, most hard-working, most docile people the standard-bearers of eternal peace and the happiness and prosperity of mankind. They had it in their power to try quickly and without bloodshed

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the great experiment for which the eastern neighbour had to sacrifice torrents of blood and decades of hardship and privation, facing a suspicious and frightened world, rather than the sympathetic and admiring one the Germans would have had. All this, in November 1918 the rulers of the new German Republic had in their power.<sup>1</sup> A little later it would not have been quite so easy; for very quickly they began to lose authority and squander the enormous moral credit with which they had been fortunate enough to start.

But still, they had it in their power to make the beautiful great country in the heart of Europe into the most liberal and progressive of all democracies. They had the best and most modern of all Constitutions, but it stood on paper only. They represented a very good cause, that of ordered liberty and the dignity of man; but they were very poor representatives.

They were very poor salesmen too. They did not know that even the best of all causes must be properly explained and duly advertised, so as to be "sold" to the most obstinate customer. They never even tried to reconcile their opponents, to convince them and win them over. They had so much to give the German people; but they gave nothing but printed paper, and never appealed to their hearts. The old traditions they took away from them, and the new ambitions they never knew how to make palatable.

They took away from them the old black, white and red flag which was dear and sacred to many, and they gave them instead the black, red and golden. This could indeed have been the great and inspiring symbol it was meant to be; but it stood on paper only and never reached the people's heart. They did not tell them what the black-red-

<sup>1</sup> It must be borne in mind, though, that they did not even want to attempt the realization of the socialist ideas they had claimed to profess.



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gold stood for; they did not convince them that these were the colours under which, seventy years before, German workers and German students had shoulder to shoulder fought and bled for liberty and justice. Nothing did those hapless, uninspired rulers do to win those steeped in old traditions for the new ideas whose beautiful symbol the new flag was meant to be. For years they allowed an undignified quarrel about the old and new flag to be the cause of disgusting party squabbles, until the Nazis substituted yet another.

They were hard and provocative to their opponents where they should have been mild and conciliatory, and weak and yielding where they should have shown who was boss.

Thus not only did they fail to win over large (and not the worst) strata of the population, but from year to year they continued to disgust the many millions of honest and eager Germans, starved of inspiration, strong leadership, good slogans, and the feeling that some time something would be done.

Hitler gave them all this. He knew better than most of the successive republican Governments. He may well be a murderer (among other things) of German grammar and style, and not merely the most uncultured but also the most uneducated of all leaders, with a mental and intellectual equipment based exclusively on half-digested and misunderstood slogans and clichés—but if there is one school lesson he learned well and remembered it is the old Roman adage of “panem et circenses”; even if on the “bread” side he may often leave much to be desired, he certainly has never let them down so far as the circuses are concerned.

Moreover, during the years of his struggle for power, he never failed to promise everybody everything; he promised the workers a paradise on earth, with good wages and

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living conditions for everybody, and that there should be a maximum of a thousand marks per month for even the biggest bosses; but he told the industrial leaders that he would keep their workers under strict control, make them do overtime at minimum wages, and that there should be never the ghost of a strike. He told the small craftsmen that they would be restored to the honour and rewards historically their due, and to Industry he promised mechanization and mass-production on the widest scale. He told the small shopkeepers that the Third Reich would rid them of the competition of the big department stores (mentioning only those which were in Jewish hands), and he promised the owners of the big stores the loyal protection of the Third Reich so long as they generously subscribed to his Party funds.

There is no space here for even the most summary description of Hitler's personality and rise to power. What we are concerned with is simply to line up the salient points essential for making subsequent events and tendencies as clear as possible.

The most essential of these points is the fact that the ups and downs of Hitler's rise to power were almost invariably in an inverse ratio to the economic and political welfare of the country. When things were in a bad way Hitler flourished; when order and even a certain modicum of prosperity was restored, Hitler went into an eclipse. When the inflation of the currency was knocking the bottom out of economic planning and turning the people into either beggars or gamblers; when Rhine and Ruhr were occupied by foreign troops and unrest and strife rampant all over the country, Hitler's star rose and shone; when, in the middle twenties, the mark was stabilized, order restored and prosperity round the corner, with the foreign troops disbanded and Locarno sending a few rays of sunshine

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through the clouds of the political horizon, then things began to look gloomy for Hitler and his party, and his armies of Brownshirts clamoured for overdue pay. It needed the crash of 1929 to save Hitler, and the subsequent years of growing economic crisis to swell his party to its maximum (genuine) size, representing just over one-third of the electorate.

This happened in the summer of 1932. It was certainly a huge Party, and its army of Brownshirts had swollen to immense proportions.

What manner of men were those youngsters who, in the early nineteen-thirties, flocked to Hitler's "Army" in their hundreds of thousands? They were of the generation that had passed its early childhood in the war years, lacking parental control; had spent its adolescence in the crazy post-war years when everything went topsy-turvy, when a box of matches cost so many hundreds of millions of marks, a sum which, even a few months earlier, might have bought a motor car; and approached manhood at the beginning of the economic crisis, when the number of unemployed soared into millions and put even well-tried and experienced men out of their jobs or on half-pay.

So far as that generation was concerned, they could not be made jobless because they had never had any work; nor did they ever seem likely to earn their living, or even get the chance of learning a trade. It seemed they were cut out only for loafing around, to be grumbled at by their families, most of whom were on the dole anyway.

In such circumstances, can we blame those boys for flocking to Hitler's Storm-troops, where at least they got something to do and to feel important about, even if it was nothing more than standing at attention somewhere or helping guard the route where the Führer or one of his paladins was expected to pass. At least they had shirts to

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their backs and breeches and, from time to time, even a couple of coins to jingle.

But such times got rarer and rarer. The Party was broke to the wide. The election campaigns (two Presidential and two Reichstag elections in that one year alone) had swallowed millions. The creditors were pressing. Moreover, there was dissension within the Party ranks. The Strassers started revolt. Other Party leaders were about to follow suit. Hitler raved and wept and (not for the first time) threatened to bump himself off. There is much evidence on all this, most of it in one of Göbbels' own books.<sup>1</sup>

The fact was that the Party had passed its peak, and during those last weeks of 1932 seemed to have definitely missed the psychological moment, if any, for seizing power by force. Nor did there seem to be the slightest chance of getting in by the constitutional methods that for years had been its boast.

Even after the peak elections of July 1932 (13,745,781 votes and 230 seats in parliament) the Party was some five million votes short of a majority. When, little more than three months later (November 6th), the electorate went to the polls again, the fourth time that year, the Nazi votes had dropped by more than two millions. The decline was rapid and, what was worse, continuing. Except for a miracle, the Party could not possibly survive another election. There would be not a brass farthing to pay for the campaign or to avoid bankruptcy, what with the creditors becoming more pressing after the landslide of the November elections. Indeed, as that fateful year of 1932 was closing, Hitler realized that only a miracle could save him.

The miracle happened, sure enough, and it can be summed up in two words: *Osthilfe-Skandal*. This will require explanation; but before we do so we have to ask why was

<sup>1</sup> *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei*, Berlin, 1933.

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it that the Junkers, those wealthy Prussian landowners and industrialists, who had kept Hitler going ever since the early 'twenties, had suddenly tightened the purse strings? There were two reasons: one was that, in these times of slump, even rich men would think twice before signing a fat cheque; but the more cogent reason was that they needed Hitler no longer. They thought he had shot his bolt and, anyway, they were in the saddle themselves. Alternative "Barons' Cabinets" were ruling the country. Von Papen had been succeeded by General von Schleicher and was now intriguing, as best as he knew how, to re-oust the General. For, lo and behold! Schleicher, though excellently connected, was actually threatening to explode the *Osthilfe-Skandal*.

Now we have arrived at that famous scandal of the *Osthilfe*. What does it mean? A literal translation would be "Eastern Help," that is, the state-subsidies for the Agrarians, mainly in East Prussia.

This state of affairs had gone on for decades, both in Imperial Germany and in the Republic. Millions of public money had been squandered. The primary idea, of course, was to help the small settlers; but in point of fact, 90 per cent of the grants used to go to big mismanaged estates whose squires openly boasted of spending large sums of such "easy money" for joy rides to Monte Carlo. In those scandals (some of the grants had continued since the beginning of the century, some of them were quite recent) many of the "best" families were implicated, including that of Reich-President Paul von Hindenburg.

Everybody knew of it. Often enough, more or less discreetly, the matter had been broached in the Reichstag and in the Press. But no one had ever dared to prick the bubble, publish the material and expose the whole gigantic graft. Schleicher dared; he was with all his faults a courageous

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man and was, moreover, infuriated by von Papen's never-ending intrigues. So he made his incredible threat and actually announced publication of the *Osthilfe* documents.

This would never do. This had to be stopped, once and for all. Something had to be done about it, at once.

Something was done. There was only one way to stop it. That fellow Hitler was needed after all.

That week, early in January, must have been the busiest in Arch-Intriguer von Papen's life; but he got what he wanted, even though it subsequently turned out to be rather different from what he had bargained for.

Having enlisted the co-operation of all those who mattered, he convened a very secret meeting with Hitler at the countryhouse near Cologne of Baron Kurt von Schröder,<sup>1</sup> the banker. This was the birth-place of the Third Reich, with Franz von Papen acting as midwife, and the labour-pains assuaged on the one side by a pretty bundle of cheques, and on the other by the knowledge of having concealed again that frightful *Osthilfe* scandal.

So secret was the meeting that even Hitler's closest advisers did not hear of it until the next day, and it was another day or two before the Press got to know.

But by now the damage was done, and with the most pressing of the creditors (including the Storm-troopers) paid something on account, the Nazi Party had a new lease of life. Moreover, a new session of furious bargaining had started between Hitler and his Lieutenants on one side, and von Papen and his clique on the other.

There was never any doubt as to the ultimate success of the negotiations because both parties knew that they needed each other. Hitler knew that the others could not do without

<sup>1</sup> The firm has a Branch in London which, some years ago, had to put up with some unpleasant publicity when it was alleged that one of the young Hohenzollern Princes was working there without a labour permit.

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him for quelling the *Osthilfe* scandal and all its implications; so he managed to drive a fairly good bargain. But the whip-hand he held over the others was not too good, because they knew that he was entirely dependent on them for getting into power quickly and thus saving his party from financial breakdown.

So far as von Papen personally was concerned, he achieved a triple success: he quelled the scandal and the loss of influence that threatened his friends;<sup>1</sup> he ousted the hated von Schleicher who had kicked him out of office a couple of months before, and he ricocheted back into Cabinet rank himself.

And as for Hitler, his was quite a good bargain in the circumstances, though not nearly so good as his dreams of six months earlier, before the decline of his Party had set in.

True: he had the Chancellorship for himself, but only two of his party-colleagues, Göring and Frick, had managed to find their way into the Cabinet. Against those three Nazis there were as many as nine Conservatives, with von Papen in the Vice-Chancellorship.

It was a far from happy or even secure constellation for Hitler, who knew very well that his shrewd business-partners, outnumbering him by three to one, meant to use him as a mere stooge and run the show themselves.

It so happened that they were mistaken. There were several subsequent events they had not bargained for, such as the burning of the Reichstag, the wholesale murder and arrest of thousands of opposition leaders and, finally, they themselves being successively kicked out of office and supplanted by old and trusted party-members.

<sup>1</sup> Actually, the *Osthilfe* scandal was only the starting-point of some much greater and more fundamental trouble: the imminent danger of a switch to the Left on the part of Schleicher, who had, for some time, been flirting with the Trade Unions with regard to a Cabinet "re-shuffle" with decided Left-wing tendencies.

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It took Hitler several months to achieve all this, though the main job was accomplished after exactly four weeks. They were the four most critical weeks (so far) of his career.

On January 30th, when the deal was clinched and Hitler appointed Chancellor of that 25 per cent Nazi Cabinet, his position was more wobbly than ever. Had there been a General Strike, the new Government could not have survived twenty-four hours. There was no question of stopping it by terror. Göring had no grip yet on the Police, and it was not until three weeks later that the Berlin Chief of Police, an anti-Nazi Conservative, was thrown out and supplanted by a Nazi. The Army was thoroughly anti-Nazi, and at least two-thirds of the population would have supported the strike.

But it was not to be, owing to the unholy rift between the two Socialist Parties. The Social Democrats wanted a "wait-and-see" policy which was more or less what everybody did. After all, there were going to be elections on March 5th. One might as well wait those four or five weeks to show Hitler where he got off. Thus Hitler gained those precious weeks in which to consolidate his position.

What was his position? One-third of the population supported him, the other two-thirds were more or less violently against him.

As to the two big Socialist Parties (between them more than one-third of the electorate) they were busy with their election campaigns, much hampered already by the official beginnings of terroristic Nazi methods, even though, for the time being, such methods would be expressed in the comparatively mild form of banning all socialist papers, tearing down their posters and stopping almost all their meetings.

As to the middle classes, represented by the big Catholic Centre Party and various shades of Liberals, National Liberals and Conservatives, their attitude to Hitler was



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something like this: "why not admit the fellow to power for a change?—he won't give us any peace anyway before he's had a taste of it,—why not let him make a proper fool of himself?—he'll find out soon enough that it's easier to shout than to govern!"—It seemed a good idea at the time, and no one thought that Hitler would find ways and means of governing *by* shouting.

Nazi historians invariably name January 30th, the day of Hitler's appointment to the Chancellery, as the beginning of the Third Reich. It was nothing of the kind. It was merely the beginning of a new Coalition Government which might or might not have lasted. Hitler was no dictator yet and certainly not the Führer. The Opposition was still above ground<sup>1</sup> and naively thinking it could stay there, with Hitler and Göring in the Government.

The Opposition could, indeed, quite easily have stayed above ground, if they had thought in time of putting Hitler in gaol. They did not. So Hitler put them in gaol, excepting those he murdered. As to those arrested, several thousands of them, the warrants were neatly prepared some days before they were used, on the night when the Reichstag was set ablaze.

Those arrested, proudly above ground, were practically all the leading functionaries of the Opposition. Those who escaped went promptly underground, and so did the new leaders who arose to fight Hitlerism from the very first day of its power.

<sup>1</sup> Except to a certain extent the Communists, who ever since the autumn of 1932 had begun to organize their "underground" cadres, partly because of better foresight, partly because they were already too much under pressure to work solely above ground. Thus the percentage of leading Communist functionaries arrested on the night of the Reichstag fire was not quite as large as it might have been.

## The Socialists Go Underground

To say that the Opposition went promptly underground is really a slight distortion of facts, much the same as saying that the Nazis promptly assumed power on that momentous January 30th.

Neither of these events was as prompt as the words imply; both took a little time—five and a half months, to be exact. For it was on July 14th that all parties other than the National-Socialists were declared illegal in the Third Reich. We shall shortly survey the various stages and landmarks that established and solidified the Nazi regime and successively ousted the Opposition.

Nazi estimates as to the presumable duration of their rule vary from sheer eternity, through Rosenberg's more precise though rather generous forecast of twenty thousand years, to Gobbels' almost defeatist estimate of a mere thousand years. But as to the Third Reich's birthday, all Nazi historians agree on January 30, 1933; some, in fact, going as far as to suggest scrapping the antiquated Christian calendar altogether, and beginning the year 1 of a new epoch with that fateful day.

Actually, as we have seen, the day merely marked the successful conclusion of several weeks of haggling between Hitler, representing the Nazi Party on the one side, and von Papen, representing certain Junker interests, on the other, resulting in a Coalition Government with the Nazis holding three out of twelve Cabinet seats.

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But they held the key positions, with Hitler as Premier, Frick at the Home Office, and Göring as Reich Minister "without portfolio," yet in charge of the Prussian Home Office. It was only in March that Göring got the Prussian Premiership and the Reich's Air Ministry; but even in February Göring and Frick between them were in control of the most important administrative body—the Police.

They made ruthless use of it, and they certainly had to; for the police, particularly in Prussia, were anything but pro-Nazi. But it took Göring and Frick only just over a week to fill all key positions in the Ministry of Interior (in both the Reich and in Prussia) with trustworthy Party members, while a couple of days later most of the "doubtful" police officers were dismissed and supplanted by Nazi henchmen.

This accomplished, Göring was ready by February 15th for the announcement that in future every political meeting would be watched by armed Police and at once dissolved if found to be critical of the Government.

Two days later the police received official orders to use their firearms against the population, and on the twentieth, after exactly three weeks of power, the climax was reached with Göring's famous "shoot first" decree, by which he assumed personal responsibility for any over-zealousness on the part of the police in using their guns. Only "false consideration" on their part would be punishable; "for failure to act is a graver fault than errors made in action."

Looking at this sequence of events now, through a distance of nearly seven years, it should have seemed fairly obvious that the Opposition would know what was coming to them and have been prepared for the emergency. But, strange as it may now seem, they did not even realize what they were up against (with the possible exception of those who happened to be the personal victims of Göring's

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"shoot first" decree), while the rank and file of the Opposition and most of their leaders were simply living in a fool's paradise—this includes the Social-Democratic Party<sup>1</sup> as well as the very large and important Catholic Centre Party.

Of course, there was the ever-increasing use of force and terrorism; being themselves the victims they could not very well overlook it. But then, one was used to that sort of thing; for years now there had been hardly a day without some political shooting; there was rather more of it now, a lot more to be sure and, moreover, sanctioned by the new Government, or anyway its 25 per cent Nazi component.

But surely, that was only a transitional period. Order would soon be restored, and the most important thing now was to wait and see and, above all, to keep calm, to use strictly constitutional means and not to soil one's hands by answering force with force.

The position was somewhat like that of a peaceful citizen seeing his house burgled, his furniture looted, members of his family raped and killed, and all the time addressing the armed gangsters like this: "If you don't desist at once, I am afraid I will have to ask my solicitors to take the most serious proceedings against you, and even now I wish to reserve my full legal rights."

It was not as if there had not been at least a will to resist among large sections of the German people; but it was to be found only on the extreme Left and Right. The Communists were perfectly ready for a general strike, but the Social Democrats would have none of it, even though they knew that it would have meant the end of Hitler.

As for General von Schleicher, on the day before he was deposed he was equally ready to call out the Reichswehr, to have Hitler, Papen and Co. arrested, and to establish a military dictatorship with strong left-wing leanings, sup-

<sup>1</sup> The Communists, by then, were practically underground.

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ported by the Social Democrats and the Catholic Centre Party. But the Social Democrats, although Schleicher had much following among Trade Union leaders, could not make up their minds whether to join such a coalition, while all the Centre Party would do was to express a vote of no confidence in the new Cabinet, thus forcing Hindenburg to dissolve the Reichstag and order new elections.

So here they had the coveted chance of fighting Nazidom with strictly constitutional means. The Opposition leaders heaved a sigh of relief. They had been rather bewildered on those first days of the new Government; they had, of course, for many years been used to Nazi rowdiness, but then the Nazis were in Opposition, and now they were in the Government and really ought to behave very much more respectably. True, they had only a 25 per cent share in the Cabinet, though they certainly made 100 per cent noise in it, and their methods seemed to be even more unconventional in Office than they were in Opposition.

It was most bewildering for the Opposition leaders. But now, thank goodness, they were in for the election campaign. Here they were on familiar ground; they had fought dozens of them during the last ten years or so. Thank God (and Hindenburg) for the election campaign! This would give them the chance of opposing Hitler with what they had always preached as their Gospel—a clean fight and strictly constitutional means for all concerned.

It was a fine theory, but what did that election campaign look like in practice? To begin with, it was at rather short notice. The Reichstag was dissolved on February 1st. The new elections were fixed for March 5th. Less than five weeks for campaigning. Not that it mattered much in the end.

As to the Nazis, for the first time they went into an election campaign without money troubles, in fact with practically unlimited funds. As to the Opposition Parties

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it hardly mattered that the preceding year's numerous election campaigns had sorely depleted their funds: they did not need them, for it so happened they were not allowed much of a campaign.

As to the Communists, it goes without saying that all their meetings, throughout the country, were summarily banned as early as February 2nd. So were practically all their papers and posters. The Social Democrats were rather luckier; their papers, etc., were not banned until a little later. Luckiest of all was the big, rich and influential Catholic Centre Party which, with utmost care and restraint, managed to keep most of its press alive throughout the first half of the month. But when, on February 18th, their biggest paper *Germania* was actually rash enough to print the Catholic Party programme, it was promptly *verboten*—the irony of the thing being the fact that *Germania's* principal shareholder was none other than Franz von Papen, Vice-Chancellor of the Reich, most prominent of the non-Nazi Cabinet-members, special protégé of Reich President von Hindenburg and spiritual father of Nazi rule.

Considering that, in the course of that election campaign, none of the Opposition Parties was given the slightest chance even to state its case to its adherents, one might as well term that last *soi-disant* "genuine election" just as much a fraud and a farce as the many subsequent "plebiscites," when the electorate was given only one party and one issue to "vote" on. Actually, the March 1933 elections seem to have been even more of a farce, because of their semblance to genuine parliamentary and democratic procedure.

In these circumstances, the result of those elections is highly significant: even with their complete monopoly or a gigantic propaganda campaign the Nazis failed to win the coveted majority; they secured 43.9 per cent only (two

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hundred and eighty-eight seats), just eighteen seats less than the Opposition Parties gained between them. Thus the Nazis had after all to resort to the help of their allies in the Cabinet, that part of the Conservatives represented by the von Papen-Hugenberg group, which had gained fifty-two seats or 8 per cent of the total electorate, a rather poor show compared with their nine seats in the Cabinet. It was only with their help that the Nazis managed to construct a "parliamentary majority" of less even than 2 per cent, and some weeks later, when they wanted the constitutional two-thirds majority in order to pass the *Ermächtigungsgesetz* (the bill giving them a blank cheque for their first Four-Year Plan), they could only get this by the simple expedient of declaring null and void the eighty-one seats of the Communists whom close to five million of the electorate had sent into Parliament. Actually, by the time that contingency arose (on March 23rd), those eighty-one deputies were, almost to a man, either in exile or gaol or six feet underground (or cremated); thus the cancelling of their votes was just as much a farce as the entire aping of parliamentary procedure on the part of men determined to rule by sheer terror.

But there is this much to be said for the Nazis, that they have always had a rather pathetic weakness for "legality," so much so that they hardly ever committed the merest murder, robbery, or anything of the kind without subsequently issuing a decree "legalizing" it *post festum*. This they did, for instance, after the June 30th massacres of 1934, and after plenty of similar events, thus reassuring their orderly Teutonic minds.

But we are straying far ahead of events; as yet, we are still in the midst of that momentous February, a couple of weeks before the elections which the opposition parties were looking forward to as a political event of the first

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magnitude and which were to turn out to be really quite meaningless, so far as their practical results were concerned.

But the opposition parties did not know that yet; at that moment they were simply bewildered; they were bewildered by a lot of things, such as the Maikowski funeral—surely an utterly unimportant and irrelevant event by itself, and yet so typical of Nazi psychology and future developments that we might do worse than devote a short space to the funeral of that humble Storm-trooper, Hans Maikowski, who would have been known to none had he not been shot in the course of the torchlight parade staged by the Nazis on the night of January 30th.

The Nazis, of course, claimed that he had been shot by Communists, whilst the Communists brought some evidence that the man had been killed by one of his own comrades with a personal grudge against him. But all this was rather irrelevant; the main thing was the State funeral accorded to that man Maikowski and the policeman who happened to be killed in the same brawl.

It was certainly a more magnificent funeral than was ever given to any German Emperor, and the only hitch was the fact that the policeman happened to be a Catholic and that his family and the Church protested against his inclusion in the Protestant ceremony. Needless to say, the protests went unheeded, though it might be interesting to check up on what happened to the policeman's family for their courage. It certainly did not spoil the splendour of the show; Hitler, Göring and Göbbels spoke at the open grave, and even the ex-Crown Prince brought his monocle to shine in the procession which was followed by roughly a hundred and fifty thousand people along routes lined by tens of thousands of Storm-troopers. )

This was the first of many similar shows (not necessarily funerals, all of them) staged no less efficiently throughout



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the next years, and observant newspaper readers will easily see the connecting link between that Maikowski funeral in February 1933 and another no less magnificent one that is perhaps fresher in their memories—the funeral in November 1938 in Düsseldorf of some obscure young Embassy official who happened to have been shot in Paris by a demented Polish Jew-boy. Just as that shooting was turned into a most convenient pretext for robbing half a million Jews of every penny they still had, so was the no less convenient Maikowski affair turned into political capital. [It so happened that the funeral was fixed for the first Sunday in February, and it goes without saying that all Opposition meetings fixed for that Sunday were stopped as being “incompatible with a day of national mourning.”] Sure enough, on future Sundays they were stopped without so subtle a motivation, and, as a matter of fact, it was on the very day after the funeral that the President was made to sign a decree forbidding any Press criticism of Hitler and his Party.

By then, having weathered the first and most dangerous week of their rule (or rather their initial share in the Cabinet), the Nazis began to entrench themselves at record speed.

On the day after the “No Criticism of Hitler” decree (February 6th), Göring put trustworthy Nazis into all the key positions at the Home Office. On the 9th most of the non-Nazi police officers were sacked, and on the 13th the same fate befell most Civil Servants in important positions.

The Opposition leaders grew more and more bewildered, and still they had not an inkling of what was coming to them, still fervently clinging to the traditions in which they had been brought up: unshakable trust in the sanctity of parliamentary procedure. Very well—they reasoned—they were now in Opposition and the Nazis were in Office,

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and in the long run this could not be but a reversal of former positions when they themselves were in Office and the Nazis were in Opposition. Certainly, there was just now a great deal of unpleasantness, and rather strange things happened; but surely things would shortly simmer down, for after all they had a Constitution and a Parliament, hadn't they? After all they were living in the twentieth century, weren't they? Surely the Nazis now in power would have to play the game somehow, before long, wouldn't they?

This is how the Opposition leaders were reasoning; and in this they made exactly the same mistake which, through many years, the Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries of great and small Democracies were to make in obstinately clinging to the notion that, morning coat or S.S. uniform, so long as a chap was officially seated in a Wilhelmstrasse office, he must needs think and act very much like his opposite number in the Quai d'Orsay or in Downing Street—a very grievous mistake, to be sure, the consequences of which were more than sinister indeed.

As to the German Opposition leaders, what with their considerably more intimate knowledge of Nazi history and methods, they certainly ought to have known better. Not that they had no fair warning: quite early in that fateful month of February, Göring in one of his broadcasts said in so many words that neither he, nor his Führer, nor his Party, ever were or ever meant to be "objective" (the Opposition leader's favourite word), nor would they even try to be "fair" to their opponents. He for one would do his damndest to further the ends of his own Party by fair means or foul, and to crush the Opposition as ruthlessly as he knew how, wherever it reared its ugly head.

The Opposition leaders, Social Democrats and Catholics

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alike, listened to this with benign smiles,<sup>1</sup> secure in their superior wisdom and political experience. Let them shout their heads off, they said, it's only propaganda anyway; they'll climb down once they have to tackle the serious business of governing, once Parliament reassembles. Just wait and see what happens after the elections!

By then, of course, the Opposition leaders couldn't help but know that they were being utterly handicapped in the election campaign to which they had looked forward so much. But there is this much to be said in extenuation of the Opposition's complete lack of understanding what they were up against: rapid though, at a distance of years, the rush of those events appears, it did not seem to happen quite as fast at the time; it was not as if *all* newspapers and *all* meetings had been banned *all at once*: it was a matter of some of them at first and for just two or three days, and then only some more and for a couple of weeks, and only then all of them and for good.

By then, of course, the last week of February had arrived, and there was little more than a week to pass before polling day arrived. But even so the Opposition leaders maintained their imperturbable calm: very well, they had had no election campaign worth speaking of, and for the final week they would not even have the least say; whilst the Nazis had and would have all the thunder they wanted. But what of it? Did propaganda, in the circumstances, really matter so much? With or without newspapers, with or without posters, with or without meetings, could they not rely on their supporters nevertheless? Didn't the electorate know the various issues perfectly well? Didn't everybody know that, with all their millions spent in electioneering, the Nazis would be hard put to get anywhere near 50 per cent?

<sup>1</sup> Not so the Communist leaders, most of whom by then were either arrested or "underground."

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Of course everybody knew it; and the Nazis knew it even better than anyone. In fact with all their initial successes gained against an absolutely lethargic Opposition, with all the important footholds secured in the Police and all other administrative bodies that mattered, with all this essential ground gained and solidified in just over three weeks, the Nazis, if they meant to rule by a totalitarian dictatorship, were still in a far from enviable position at the beginning of that last week in February.

Here they were, facing an election which at best might get them nearly 50 per cent, just enough for a tiny majority with the additional 7 or 8 per cent for which their noble Allies in office might be good. Beggarly enough for the nine seats they were still holding down in a Cabinet of twelve! That too would have to be changed before long, the more so as those stuck-up Barons seemed still to be fondling pious hopes of bossing the show themselves! But how to stop them? How to kick them out of the Cabinet? And how, first of all, to deal with that other 50 per cent of the population? How to get rid of the Opposition, once the Reichstag reassembled in earnest? If only those damned Opposition leaders weren't as meek as all that! If only they would let themselves be provoked into trying some half-baked revolt or other, so that one could squash them with the mailed fist and send them all to gaol or, better still, chop their heads off!

But, alas, they were still all there, with their heads screwed on as soberly as ever, and in what few meetings or papers were still allowed them, they would keep on shouting for discipline and the necessity of using only strictly constitutional means.

Such were at that time the thoughts and apprehensions of the Nazis; they certainly had every reason to dread the meeting of the Reichstag of whose present election they

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were making such a farce; and in any event they had no use for the Reichstag nor ever meant to use it, now that they were in power. But something had to be done and that quickly, lest those incredibly meek and patient leaders of the Opposition should, after all, see their policy triumph.

For there is this much to be said for those leaders: unforgivably stupid though their lethargic policy was in the first week of February (to say nothing of the unique opportunity missed on January 30th, the birthday of the Hitler-Papen Coalition, when a little energetic and concerted action would have sent it toppling), ever since the second week in February, when Göring had energetically and rapidly begun to solidify the regime, the Opposition's wait-and-see policy seemed to be perfectly sound.

I say "seemed," not "was." It was indeed hardly possible at that time for normal human beings to foresee the fantastic things that were to happen in the immediate future. Actually as that February was drawing to its end, quite a number of Opposition leaders began to feel better and better about the future. Truly, they had been robbed of all their own political weapons, they were denied their constitutional rights to speak and write and to assemble freely; but—so they reasoned, not unwisely—would not increasing Nazi terrorism ultimately turn upon its perpetrators like a boomerang? Would not the people, even those now supporting the Nazis, soon grow wise to the real merits of their taskmasters?

One thing is certain: never did the Opposition leaders look forward to the forthcoming Reichstag session as then; there at long last they would have the reward of their long suffering and infinite patience and self-control; there no Nazi would be able to interfere with their freedom of speech; there, on the familiar ground of their Reichstag benches, they would hold forth on the shameful and

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thoroughly unconstitutional incidents of those last weeks, and they would have plenty to say. They would put up the most searching parliamentary questions, worrying and embarrassing the Nazis no end and steadily depriving them of their popular support, until, finally, the time was ripe to oust them by strictly constitutional means, or else to come to some "working agreement" with them, as the Trade Union leaders especially still fondly hoped.

This was how the Opposition of that time reasoned, and at the time it did not seem nearly so crazy as it does now. They simply did not know enough yet about Nazi methods and mentality. Were they as wise then as they are now (those still alive) they might have realized the utter naïveté of expecting Nazis to submit themselves to parliamentary control; they might have realized that the Nazi regime can be broken but never bent, that there is no possible way of compromise with Nazis, and that Nazis never would nor could use the Reichstag as anything but a farcical show-piece.

Indeed, as that February was drawing to its close and election day approached, the Nazis were rather in a quandary. Something had to be done about the Reichstag and those meek Opposition leaders who were refusing so obstinately to give cause for being put down by brute force. It was a tough problem, but they solved it. They did so with almost awe-inspiring directness and simplicity. In fact, they solved both problems at once, the problem of the Reichstag and of the Opposition: they simply burned the Reichstag and then accused their opponents of the crime and put them all away, either in neat but large concentration camps, or in even neater but small urns.

I do not propose here to devote more than the most summary glance to the Reichstag fire. What we are concerned with is the aftermath of that historic conflagration.

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It was in the night of February 27th that the world was shocked by the news of the fire. To understand that event's full significance and implications, its motives as well as its effects, it must be borne in mind that three days earlier, with an enormous blast of publicity, the Nazis had made a search of *Liebknecht-Haus*, the then Communist Headquarters.

It was probably the most thoroughly painstaking house-search ever made; dozens of Gestapo officials, accompanied by hundreds of Storm-troopers, spent an entire day searching the house from roof to cellar—particularly the cellars, or the “catacombs” as they were called in Nazi reports, so as to give them a fittingly sinister atmosphere.

Actually, in those cellars (as well as in other parts of the building) the Communist Party had been keeping most of their reserve stores of books, brochures, pamphlets, etc., as well as posters, leaflets and other election material, and, having searched every nook and cranny, the vigilant Gestapo could find nothing more incriminating than a great many copies of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* which at that time, after all, could still be bought at most Berlin bookshops for the equivalent of twopence.

And yet, two days after the search, on the 26th (the eve of the Reichstag fire) the Nazis came out with an even bigger blast of publicity on the sensational finds in the Liebknecht House: designs to murder all prominent Nazis and other right-thinking citizens, detailed plans to burn the Reichstag and several museums and all the Ministries (in fact, practically all public buildings)<sup>1</sup>—a most fiendish scheme to wipe out civilization by sheer terrorism, a scheme most elaborately complete in every detail!

All this, no more nor less, was alleged to be the sensa-

<sup>1</sup> In the old Imperial Palace an act of arson was alleged to have been actually started, though nipped in the bud, thanks to Nazi vigilance.

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tional discovery in the "catacombs" of the Communist Headquarters. It was shouted over the radio and splashed all over the front pages of the papers. But only vague generalizations were produced, and none of the alleged "elaborate detail" was substantiated. This—so Göbbels announced—would be published in due time, complete with masses of unassailable documentary evidence.

Not one word of this was ever published, for the simple reason that none of it ever existed. The Nazis did not bother even to fake it. They could easily do without it. For it so happened that, exactly twenty-four hours later, the Reichstag went up in flames, and within a further twenty-four hours the first batch of fifteen hundred Opposition leaders, accused of being implicated in the arson, were safely under lock and key. The warrants for their arrests had been tidily prepared many days in advance.

As to that sensational "documentary evidence," alleged to have been discovered in the "catacombs," no one in those hectic days thought of asking questions; afterwards it was still occasionally mentioned and then conveniently forgotten, but not before it had fully served its purpose of embellishing the Nazi story of the Reichstag fire.

This is the gist of the story they tried to "sell" to the German people: There—our beautiful Reichstag in flames! We've told you all along that those Communists would shrink at nothing, and indeed, if it hadn't been for our Führer's vigilance, there is no telling what else they might have done. Just think of those dastardly plans we unearthed in their gruesome catacombs! Surely, the Reichstag was meant to be a beginning only, a beacon<sup>1</sup> for further destruction! Most likely you and I and most of us would by now have been burned to cinders in our own homes if the

<sup>1</sup> This word was repeatedly used by Hitler and other Nazi Leaders in this context.



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Führer hadn't saved us in the nick of time by clumping down on those criminals, crushing them ruthlessly and for all time!

In the light of subsequent events the story has an uncanny likeness to later stories of Viennese blood-brethren, begging to be allowed into the Reich; of the downtrodden Sudetenland, crying out to be liberated from the Czech yoke; of a Czech Government yearning for the Nazis to come and tidy up their capital; or helpless Danzigers ravished by brutal Poles.

It was all very much of a pattern; but the credit for the original coup of the Reichstag fire seems to belong to a considerable extent to Göbbels, who at that time was not yet a Minister,<sup>1</sup> but only Propaganda Chief for the Party. It is said that Göbbels' original idea was to fake an attempt on the Führer's life, but that this was vetoed by Hitler on the comprehensible argument that it might put ideas into people's heads.

While the idea (mainly Göbbels') cannot but be considered ingenious, the execution (principally Göring's) left much to be desired; it was, on the whole, and judged in terms of subsequent Nazi coups, one of the clumsiest jobs they have ever done, one that might well have been their undoing in those early days.

To begin with, they were clumsy in the choice of their stooge, that young Dutch nitwit Marinus van der Lubbe, whose erstwhile homosexual relations with Storm-troop Leader Röhm and other prominent Nazis could later all too easily be proved. Even clumsier (by being far too obvious) was the idea of having that pitiable youth "discovered" in the burning building, practically naked, but with (of all things!) a Communist Party ticket in the pockets of his trousers, the only garment he wore. This

<sup>1</sup> Of "Propaganda and enlightenment of the people" (*Minister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*).

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was all the clumsier because it could easily be proved that Lubbe had been expelled from the Dutch Communist Party years before. Moreover, it was much too tall a story for even the most trusting of all worlds to believe that an imbecile young foreigner, totally ignorant of Reichstag topography and actually more than half-blind should have laid, without aid, some sixty complicated fire-sites over a large area in little over two minutes. Even Nazi Judges, later on, had to admit the impossibility of the Dutchman having worked alone.

This brings us to the grossest blunder the Nazis made with regard to the Reichstag fire: their effrontery in taking the matter before a public court and in braving a monster trial in the full glare of world-wide publicity. They certainly did not do it from sheer swank; they were hoping to make a great deal of political capital out of it; and having once announced the full-dress trial before the Supreme Court, they could not very well back out.

Had they known beforehand what they were letting themselves in for: the impossibility of proving their case, no end of embarrassment for Göring, Göbbels, and other leaders who could not avoid appearing in Court, and the accused turning himself into a vigorous accuser—could they have foreseen all this, they certainly would have done without the limelight, they would have handled the Reichstag fire case as they handled hundreds of similar ones in later years, in strictest camera, and, after a few hours' mock "trial," a little head chopping.

But the monster trial, after more than six months' preparation, did take place towards the end of 1933, and to this day every decent German blushes with shame at the thought of the crass partiality of the Court, of grey-haired judges besmirching their high office, cringing before their criminal task-masters.

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When the Court, finally, could not but acquit<sup>1</sup> those accused, it was not justice and courage that prompted the verdict, but merely the handful of foreign pressmen who could not well be excluded from the Court. It was simply because the eyes of the world happened to be trained on that particular case. In hundreds of cases later, Nazi judges had no compunction in sentencing men and women no less innocent than Dimitroff, Torgler, Popoff and Taneff.

Yet the very fact that after six months of preparation and two months of trial, and after hearing hundreds of witnesses and using all the power of State and Party to try to turn even the absurdest lies of the most ludicrous "witnesses" into incriminating evidence,—the very fact that all those enormous efforts failed to produce one single shred of evidence, proves conclusively the Opposition's complete innocence of the crime as well as the Nazis' brazen mendacity in accusing their opponents of the criminal arson they themselves had committed.

As to the mass of clues and actual evidence of Nazi guilt, those who followed the Leipzig trial closely might remember how those Supreme Court judges (to say nothing of the "Counsel" officiating for the accused) wilfully neglected their duty of following them up and disclosing the real culprits; as a matter of fact, they went to any length in the effort to cover such traces up.

Not that it helped them much. They could not hide the truth. Sufficient knowledge, clues, witnesses and documents, and legal brains were available outside the Reich to piece together the overwhelming mass of circumstantial evidence and weave it into a net that, before the court of world opinion, would leave no loophole of escape for the Nazi culprits.

In the Leipzig Court indictment as many as thirty-one flagrant contradictions were discovered, each one of them

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pointing to Nazi guilt. Even the Leipzig Court had to admit that there must have been a considerable number of incendiaries, and that their only feasible access to the building was through the subterranean passage connecting it with the Reichstag-President's palace; that was Hermann Göring. Quite obviously that complicated act of incendiarism had to be carefully organized and thoroughly rehearsed. It so happened that the night porter, when cross-examined as a witness, deposed the damning evidence that for several nights preceding the fire he had heard the steps of a considerable body of men in the subterranean passage; those men could only have come from and returned to the house of Reichstag-President Göring. It so happened, also, that on the day of the fire the Reichstag staff was sent home at one (instead of at six) by the Nazi house-inspector, a subordinate of Göring. It so happened that, after the fire was started, the alarm was late and that a detachment of Storm-troopers was actually on the scene before the Berlin fire brigade; moreover, the Chief of the Berlin fire brigade, when wishing to call a state of supreme alarm, was prevented by order of his superior, the Prussian Home Secretary, Hermann Göring.

There is here neither the space nor the need to delve further into the enormous amount of circumstantial evidence available<sup>1</sup> on the fact and circumstances of Nazi guilt. There is also a "confession" on record, on the part of a Storm-trooper, said to have been one of the incendiary party in the subterranean passage and subsequently to have escaped into France. There is also the famous "Oberföhren Document"<sup>2</sup> which, even though its authen-

<sup>1</sup> For detailed accounts see the four or five pertinent books and brochures listed in the bibliography at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ernst Oberföhren, Leader of the Right-wing Conservative faction in the Reichstag, was found "suicided" on May 7, 1933. He seems

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ticity has been questioned, has a very genuine ring; moreover, there is a deposition posted abroad on behalf of Storm-troop Group-Leader Ernst, a prominent Nazi implicated in the arson and subsequently murdered in the Party "purge" of June 30, 1934.

As a matter of fact, that famous "night of the long knife" (as the Nazis called it) seems to have afforded a welcome opportunity for doing away with quite a number of men who "knew too much," particularly with regard to the Reichstag fire. At the moment of writing, it would seem that of all those known or strongly suspected of having been actively engaged in the arson Göring and Count Helldorf are the only survivors; and, considering that under present circumstances their expectation of old age seems problematic, it may well be that none will survive to tell the story, unless the Nazi archives, once we get at them, should divulge something for the more fastidious historian.<sup>1</sup> ✓

But even while, with all the enormous amount of circumstantial evidence available, there is nothing that would be considered direct evidence in an English Court of Law,

to have had some considerable inside information on the Reichstag plot. The memorandum, which he dictated or caused to be written, was widely (though, of course, secretly) circulated in typescript and one copy was smuggled out of the country.

<sup>1</sup> In an interview published in the *Paris Soir* of December 9, 1939, Herr Rauschning, erstwhile Nazi President of the Danzig Senate, explains how a few days after the Reichstag fire he happened to meet Göring, Himmler, Frick, and a few *gauleiters* in Hitler's ante-room; and how Göring, with considerable relish, boasted of his personal responsibility for the incendiarism, adding that the Führer had "suggested" it to him, having been too squeamish to order the necessary arrangements himself. There seems to be no reason to doubt this evidence of so authoritative a witness as Herr Rauschning, even though, knowing what he did, he clung to his position in the Nazi hierarchy for another eighteen months and failed to impart such important information until his fourth year of exile.

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there is one argument which proves Nazi guilt of the crime even more clearly than all those hundreds of substantiated, incriminating details. It is this: Since the trial itself proved, beyond doubt, the Opposition's innocence of the crime; since, on the other hand, the fire cannot possibly have been a coincidence or the work of some individual lunatic; since, rather, it must have been the carefully planned and organized effort of a great many persons supplied with considerable means and facilities, such as the uncontrolled use of the subterranean passage, there cannot possibly be any logical alternative to the conclusion that the Nazis were responsible. Moreover, they had everything to gain from it, whilst for the Opposition it was in more than one respect a terrible calamity.

That historic conflagration interests us in one of its aspects only: by accusing the Opposition of a crime perpetrated by themselves, the Nazis secured the coveted opportunity of slaying or gaoling all the leaders of the Opposition on whom they could lay their hands; by the time that even a Nazi Court, by its verdict of Not Guilty, had to admit the brazen mendacity of the original accusation, more than nine months had elapsed, the damage to the Opposition was done, the Nazi purpose achieved, the Reign of Terror started, the Opposition driven underground.

As a matter of fact, this applies to Socialist Opposition only, although it is not implied that the non-Socialist Opposition could remain above ground; it merely means that non-Socialist Opposition took longer to come into being, and that when it did it had to stay underground from the very beginning, with a few notable exceptions, such as the Protestant Pastors and some of the Catholic Priests.

As to the Left Wing, the first smashing blow hit them in the very night of the Reichstag fire: Liberals, Pacifists,

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precise demarcation line valid for the ambulatory activities of their respective charges. The whole thing had nothing whatever to do with politics; it was a simple case of underworld manslaughter (and thus dealt with by a Berlin Court of Law). But Dr. Göbbels,<sup>1</sup> either because he was a friend of Wessel, or for sheer whimsey or, more probably, because he was just in need of a "scoop," boosted the disgusting little affair into a first-class political murder, raised Wessel to the status of a "martyr" and ultimately the Saint of the Party. A most fitting one, it might be added.

Anyway, the fact that the name of a pimp was substituted for one sacred to many was one of the workers' minor worries, at a time when day by day they were being robbed of all their property, organizations, and means of open resistance.

Apart from all those robberies of material assets the most remarkable one in the sphere of spiritual values was that of May Day, traditional international holiday of the working class; to try and appropriate May Day's considerable symbolical meaning, sentimental value and, historical background for his own party was yet another of Joseph Göbbels' shrewd ideas. It was carried through with the Nazis' considerable flair for showmanship, but never with any success, even though for some years on every May 1st some millions of workers were forced to march under Nazi banners for the benefit of Nazi newsreels.

Yet again the Nazi leaders gave evidence of their shrewd sense of timing by choosing the very day after "their" first May Day for the final dissolution of the workers' Trade Unions.

By then, of course, there was not so very much left to be dissolved, and indeed, this is, just as much as the clever

<sup>1</sup> At that time a mere propaganda Chief for the Party and still far from being a Cabinet Minister.

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timing, very typical of Nazi technique so often applied in foreign politics later: to conquer patiently "from within" and then only to apply the well-timed spectacular blow. It is exactly the same technique that was applied in Vienna, in the Sudetenland and in Danzig; but it stood its first test when, after a methodical destruction of individual Trade Union centres, the "final blow," spectacular rather than shattering, was delivered on May 2, 1933.

Officially, thus, that day must figure as one of the landmarks in our story, though by that time the Opposition had been "underground" for several weeks, trying to entrench itself in new camouflaged positions and starting on its long and weary uphill fight.





## Part Two

### ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION



## Socialist Underground Work

Organized underground activity against the Nazi regime began almost immediately upon its assumption of real power on the night of the Reichstag fire, February 27th. The first efforts of anti-Nazi propaganda within the Reich can be traced as far back as the first week in March 1933, though it naturally took several months before the illegal movement<sup>1</sup> was anywhere near functioning as a nation-wide organization.

The initiative for organized underground opposition came from the extreme political Left, mainly the Communists at first, with the Social Democrats participating to an ever-increasing degree.

One of the principal reasons for the Communists' initiative was their preparedness for the contingency. Many of their functionaries were trained in conspiratorial technique,<sup>2</sup> and somehow they had used the quiet years of "legality" to prepare for the status of "illegality," very much like a General Staff in peace time lays its plans for

<sup>1</sup> A clumsy denomination, though a literal translation of the Opposition's self-inflicted misnomer *Illegale Bewegung* (which is actually an historically established term, dating from the time of the French Revolution). Yet, instead of respecting the letter of the law even when assumed by persons recognized as criminals, it would have seemed more fitting for the Opposition to call itself the "Legal Movement" against the illegal usurpers of power.

<sup>2</sup> Quite a few had some practical experience of "illegality" in 1923.

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the contingency of war. A poor analogy of course: for who has ever heard of a General Staff deprived of most of its officers on the very day of mobilization. This exactly was the position on February 28th of the Opposition, forced to start its underground battle without leaders. Over a thousand had been gaoled or murdered the previous night, and considerably more were to suffer the same fate within the next few days.

Those who had escaped went under cover as best they could and came out camouflaged. Those known to have moustaches shaved them off. Others grew beards. All changed their names and residences, and, in the first month or two, few spent two consecutive nights in the same place. Many walked across the Czech, Swiss, or French border in the dead of night and, keeping up the pretence of being abroad, returned with faked passports. And all the time with infinite care they continued the reorganization of their smashed cadres and trained new leaders not yet known to the Gestapo.

The basic principle of organized underground Opposition was very simple; it was later emulated by the Social Democrats and to a certain extent by the right-wing opposition.

It was the principle of the smallest possible unit, called a "cell" (*Zelle*). A minimum number of particularly reliable and experienced men and women were to keep up contact between the individual cells of a district, and a mere handful were to hold the threads of contact between districts. A very elastic system and very likely the only one that in the circumstances had any chance of practicability.

Here are, in rough outline, the basic rules pertinent to the organization and routine of "cells."

Under no circumstances must a cell completely pass out of existence; even if it should be completely destroyed

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through the death or arrest of all or the majority of its members, reorganization or rebuilding must forthwith take place.

No cell, as a rule, may contain more than six to eight members, four of whom may be called executives, though, in fact, they never called themselves anything of the kind. One of these (and one substitute lest he be arrested) is the leader of the cell, chief organizer of its activities and, incidentally, contact man with other cells.

Another one of those four particularly experienced members takes charge of propaganda, is responsible for the cell's share in the production and distribution of leaflets, handbills, and other forms of propaganda. Yet another one looks after the members' personal interests, particularly when they are working in one and the same factory; in other words, he fulfils the functions of the Trade Unions which were smashed by the Nazis, organizes complaints, petitions and, if need be, one of those innumerable little "sit-down strikes" by means of which German workers quite often secured redress of special grievances, even in the face of severest Gestapo pressure.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth of the cell's "executives" acts as a sort of defence minister, with the extremely important task of safeguarding the cell's camouflage, organizing precautions and fending off danger and suspicion so far as possible.

To call those four leading members of each cell "executives" does by no means imply that the cell's "non-executive" members are without any function except that of being led and assigned subordinate tasks. This would have been impossible since, under the circumstances, even the most

<sup>1</sup> It was during the later years of Hitlerism, when "ca' canny" was systematically built up to become the chief weapon of the working-class opposition, that these subversive T.U. leaders were particularly active and became the most important executives of their respective cells.

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menial job of the rawest of active members required not merely courage but a considerable amount of initiative, presence of mind and independent thinking. As a matter of fact, it has always been one of the movement's basic principles to train and specialize the younger and less experienced members as soon and as much as possible, since at any moment the arrest of someone higher up might force the less experienced member into his shoes.

Moreover it was, almost from the start, one of the movement's principles to have the leaders of each cell either re-elected or changed every six months, and even though in difficult circumstances this rule could not always be strictly adhered to, it shows the general trend of a movement whose basic need was from the first to preserve its elasticity.

One of the earliest major problems was to ensure the growth of the movement and, incidentally, to make up for the havoc caused by a never-ending series of Gestapo raids, many of which led to mass-arrests on a considerable scale. This was one of the reasons why, if the movement was not to die out, recruitment of new members could not be left to chance; it was, in fact, systematically organized, though needless to say, it had to be handled with extreme care. The general rule was for each trusted and experienced member, each month, to be assigned the definite task of working on a certain number of persons considered to be sympathizers and potential collaborators.

Harassed by the mightiest, most efficient and most ruthless police force of all times, with every member of the movement by day and by night in constant danger of life, limb and liberty, caution was always a matter of extreme importance.

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After the severe losses inflicted by the Gestapo all through the spring and summer of 1933 the leaders of the movement put their heads together and devised a set of general precautions, as well as special rules for the production and distribution of propaganda.

The primary rule was for no member to know more about the movement in general than was absolutely necessary for carrying through whatever immediate task was allotted to him. This, of course, was not specially devised; it was, in fact, the basic principle of the entire (preconceived) system of extreme decentralization: the "cell" system, the main idea being that the less a man knows the less he can be made to tell under torture. Moreover, it was the only efficient precaution against vital harm being done by the infiltration of Gestapo spies into individual cells; this, indeed, happened often enough, but thanks to the system, it hardly ever did more harm than the break-up of that particular cell and the arrest of half-a-dozen men. Obviously, had it not been for that rigidly enforced system of studied ignorance outside one's own very limited sphere of activity, one single efficient Gestapo spy safely in the confidence of one single cell might have easily broken up the whole district, and within a few weeks the Gestapo would have smashed the entire movement beyond resuscitation.

Yet, obvious and essential though that system of extreme decentralization was from the very beginning (without it the movement could never have lasted even that first summer of Nazidom) stricter rigidity in enforcing the system was given first place in that set of precautionary rules drawn up in the autumn of 1933; to study these rules now is all the more interesting as they give a fairly clear picture of the particular troubles connected with the growing-pains of the movement.



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Here is a summary of the rules drawn up and circulated in September and October 1933:

Far more stringent observance of the rule that members must, under no circumstances, be aware of the activities of any cell but their own; nor are they to be informed of more than they absolutely have to know so as to carry through the individual tasks assigned to them.

Meetings never again to be held in public-houses (not even in private rooms of such) nor at any other place open to the public, except possibly in the open air (woods, lake-shore, etc.), provided the place is sufficiently inaccessible, unsuspecting, and guarded. Meetings preferably to be held in one of the members' own rooms.

Time and place of meetings to be circulated as late as technically feasible.

Invitations, announcements, general information, etc., not to be put in writing, if it can be avoided. Whenever it is unavoidable such written or printed matter to be destroyed as soon as it has served its purpose. This does not apply to actual propaganda material which should be preserved and circulated as far as possible and never be destroyed except in cases of extreme emergency.

Any written or printed matter (other than propaganda material) pertaining to routine which ought to be preserved must be kept in such a place where, if need be, it can be destroyed at a moment's notice.

No meeting to be held, without musical instruments, playing cards or any other suitable means of camouflage being handy.

No meeting to be held without one of the members keeping a permanent watch or look-out.

Place of meetings to be frequently changed.

Meetings of more than six to eight members to be avoided whenever possible.

Should a larger meeting be unavoidable, never more than four members are to meet at a given point and there only to learn

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the actual place of the meeting; they are then to proceed there in twos or, better still, singly.

Whoever, on his way to a meeting, finds himself followed by suspicious characters must forthwith abandon attendance of that meeting.

Punctuality at all meetings, appointments and routine business is essential and must be taken for granted, so that any undue delay can be safely attributed to causes beyond the power of the person concerned.

No one ever to risk suspicion by waiting more than five minutes at any given point.

The whereabouts of typewriters, multigraphing and printing machinery must be known to cell-leaders only and to those personally concerned with these technicalities.

Should there be the slightest suspicion of one or several members of a cell being watched by the Gestapo such members must forthwith refrain from any further activity or contact with the others, so as not to endanger the latter.

It remains to be seen whether such members, at some later time, might be safely used for active collaboration elsewhere.

New members and particularly those coming from the opposite camp, before entrusted any serious work, must be watched for some time and have their reliability tested.

Suspicious elements within a cell should be tested and possibly trapped by misinforming them as to the time and place of some meeting alleged to be particularly important, and by then watching the Gestapo's reaction to the non-existent meeting.

Each cell to have a reserve of from one to three particularly qualified and trustworthy members who are to remain entirely inactive, so long as all goes well; it is their task to carry on and, if need be, to reorganize the cell completely, if some members should be arrested or the entire cell be smashed by the Gestapo.

Every member is sworn to unflinching fortitude when arrested and cross-examined by the Gestapo; even under severe torture he must not give away what he knows about fellow-members and their activities.

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These rules have been strictly enforced ever since the autumn of 1933, with the immediate result of a considerable reduction of casualties, in spite of the ever-increasing strength and efficiency of the Gestapo.

Apart from these mainly precautionary rules, about the same time another set of no less important rules was set up with regard to the positive and constructive work of the movement. Obviously, this was essential in order to avoid needless risk of manpower and loss of time by having meetings become mere debating clubs for futile arguments and for bemoaning the common plight, a temptation only too comprehensible (and pardonable) under the circumstances.

For that reason it was declared the primary duty for each cell-leader, at the beginning of each month, to draw up a concrete working plan to be adhered to as strictly as circumstances would permit. Moreover, the four "Department-Chiefs"<sup>1</sup> of each cell were to meet at as regular intervals as possible, in order to discuss current events and decide on steps to be taken. Furthermore, they were to make a regular practice of training younger and less experienced members and, as far as possible, specializing them for qualified work, such as the writing and painting of slogans, distribution of leaflets, gleaning of information from Nazi organizations, and all technical jobs connected with multi-graphing and printing.)

( It will be remembered that of the four "department-chiefs" of each cell, No. 1 was the leader, principal organizer and contact man with other cells, No. 4 the "defence-minister" in charge of precautions, whilst the other two were to look after the movement's concrete and positive work) which may be roughly classified into these two groups: (a) Resistance in the Factories, (b) Propaganda. We will look at them in this order.

<sup>1</sup> Not that they ever assumed such names.

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### (a) *Resistance in the Factories*

With the various great German Trade Unions destroyed, all the Nazis offered the workers in exchange was the so-called *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (German Labour Front), a huge organization headed by the notorious grafter Dr. Ley and enabled, by dint of forced contributions from every German worker, to build palatial administrative buildings and assembly halls replete with marble and imitation Greek columns, at a time when building material and labour for badly-needed tenements were sorely lacking.

Whatever that huge and expensive organization, apart from feeding its own mushroom growth, was doing directly towards its alleged purpose of serving the workers' interests was mostly eyewash. Such was the much-publicized decree that in the National-Socialist State such shameful class distinctions as boss and worker, employer and employee would be abolished, and that henceforth every German worker could proudly call himself *Gefolgschaftsmitglied*, whilst his boss could be simply *Gefolgschaftsführer*; thus even the humblest labourer at, say, the Krupp Works, though he might get no extra wages for overtime or Sunday work, had this consolation, that if and when he set eyes on Baron Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach he was perfectly entitled to address him as *Herr Gefolgschaftsführer* instead of the old-fashioned *Herr Generaldirektor*.

Whatever Dr. Ley's "Labour Front" secured for the workers in the way of more concrete blessings was also more or less "shop-window dressing"; such was the wildly publicized "Strength through Joy" (*Kraft durch Freude*) organization, special deductions for which were made from every wage earned in the Third Reich. For those extra pennies missing from their weekly pay-envelopes, the great majority of German workers never saw any return at all, whilst a chosen few (exclusively loyal party members)

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were from time to time taken on special joy rides as far as Madeira or Naples, with plenty of Nazi reporters, press-photographers and newsreel men on board to help show the world the kind of workers' paradise into which the Third Reich was blossoming.

¶No less publicized and considerably more lucrative for Nazi Party Funds (and some of the leaders' private accounts) was another of the Labour Front's brain-children: the "German People's Car."

This brilliant idea was started as late as 1938, and it was probably the most gigantic hire-purchase swindle ever conceived. What it amounted to and the way it was presented by Nazi salesmen was roughly as follows:

"Our Führer has decided that in due time every German working man is to have his own car. Our brilliant engineers have designed a lovely little family car to sell as cheaply as one thousand Reichsmarks (£50 at par). All you have to do is to pay five marks a week for four years and then the car is yours, and since it is most economical in petrol consumption all you have to do for running expenses is to continue budgeting for five marks a week."

But here is the snag: "Our Führer says it would be unworthy of an honest German working man to run into debt; that is why, of course, you will not receive the car before you complete your two hundred instalments. Should you default on only one of them the subscriptions paid will be forfeit. Otherwise, you can safely rely on delivery after four years. So you had better start paying now. Even though the factory that will produce your car has not yet been built the blue-prints are all ready, and the Führer is quite delighted with them."

¶To grasp the almost ludicrous impudence of this scheme it should be borne in mind that in the Third Reich the vast majority of German workers could not possibly spare one

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mark a week, let alone five, and even those highly-skilled workers, foremen, clerical staffs, etc., who could scrape it together, either have some cheap second-hand vehicle already or cannot afford it anyway. And yet it was exactly that class, with incomes ranging from three to five pounds a week, that were to be mulcted through that particular swindle. Nor could they refuse by shutting their doors in the faces of the "German People's Car" salesmen; that would never do, for those salesmen had all the might of the Party (including the Gestapo) behind them to back up the very eloquent "sales-argument" that whoever refused to buy the "People's Car" was practically committing a personal insult to the Fuhrer, who had his very heart in the scheme. No one, of course, would be *forced* to buy the car; but there was no telling what might happen to one who revealed himself as too obstinate a spoil-sport.

Thus some hundreds of thousands promptly began to pay five marks a week for a car they did not want, could not afford, and would never see. The whole thing was nothing but a new tax, couched in the terms of a blessing, a bargain and a present all rolled into one.

As to the factory that was to produce that blessing, the Nazi Press for weeks on end published the glowing assertion that in comparison the works of Mr. Henry Ford or General Motors would look like toy shops.

Meanwhile a few advance models were got ready, and a good little car it looked for the price, when photographed with some famous racing-motorist at the wheel. Most of these models, however, seem to have been used for Nazi leaders, major and minor, to present to each other for photographic purposes. For weeks there was no Nazi paper without its picture of the Fuhrer inspecting his new "People's Car," Gobbels taking his little daughter for a ride, or "Labour-Front" Leader Dr. Ley smiling at the

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wheel of what after all was his very own and highly profitable brain-child. Hermann Göring seems to be the only Nazi leader never photographed in a "People's Car," for the simple reason that he could not possibly squeeze his bulk into one.

We had to deal, at some length, with this and other peccadilloes of the "German Labour Front" because that organization, after all, was meant to be the legitimate successor to and substitute for the Trade Unions; we had to make at least a cursory inspection of the background on which the workers had to proceed in building up their own subversive system of safeguarding their interests as best as they could under the watchful eyes of their taskmasters and in constant terror of the Gestapo.

But before going into some details of these efforts we must give a cursory glance at the general labour conditions in the Third Reich.

First of all, there is yet another fallacy to be exploded, one of the most prevalent with regard to the Third Reich, and generally expressed in this way: "However much one may dislike the Nazis, they do seem to have solved the problem of unemployment once and for all."

The answer to this is that the much-publicized "solution of unemployment" in the Third Reich has never been anything but fake, even though it is true that in 1932, the last pre-Hitler year and incidentally the climax of the last great economic crisis (by no means an exclusively German one), there were some six million unemployed persons in Germany and that now there are practically none.

The fact that Hitler came in at the tail-end of a world-wide economic crisis and that a considerable percentage of the then unemployed would anyway have been back at work soon, is one of the "miracle's" minor explanations only; much more important is the fact that the Nazi

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regime almost immediately started to build up the armament industries at an ever increasing pace and on a scale almost unbelievably beyond the country's normal resources.

But there are at least two other major explanations, apart from the hundreds of thousands of persons (mostly Jews) thrown out of their jobs, further hundreds of thousands in gaols and concentration camps, with even further hundreds of thousands constantly employed in hunting, guarding and ruling them.

These two major explanations are: firstly, the enormously inflated party-bureaucracy and Storm-troops, utilizing literally millions of wage-earners, the great majority in utterly unproductive and mostly useless occupations; and secondly (even more important), what is summed up in the one word "autarchy," meaning the Nazi leaders' (particularly Göring's) obstinate scheme of making the country independent of foreign raw materials and thus blockade-proof in time of war. That scheme, in spite of all the ingenuity of German chemists and inventors, was foredoomed to failure; what it amounted to, roughly, was that in order to save some of the scanty gold and foreign currency<sup>1</sup> for importing say rubber, enormous investments were made in complicated machinery for home production of a substitute article at greater cost and of inferior quality.

This sort of thing went on for years on a gigantic scale and in many industries, with an enormous waste of time and energy. Thus, even though millions of Germans unemployed in the 1932 slump were put back to work under Hitler and were, in fact, slave-driven and doing hours of overtime every day, the general standard of living was not much higher than it was for those on the dole in the worst pre-Hitler slumps.

Thus, the strange situation arose that, with the country's

<sup>1</sup> Needed for essential and unsubstitutable raw materials of armaments.



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entire working population working harder than ever, its standard of living became increasingly lower, a position which seems even more absurd, considering that at the same time, by a series of spectacular successes in foreign politics, the country "gained" a considerable addition of territory and wealth.

The apparent absurdity of that situation is, of course, easily explained when it is borne in mind that an inordinate proportion of all those billions of working hours went into producing armaments and that, moreover, the working population had to carry the parasitic burden of an enormous and ever-growing party administration, incredible exploitation and graft.

With the German adult worker's gross wage averaging about twenty-eight shillings per week, in spite of the Third Reich's rapidly increasing production, wage rates actually remained below the crisis level of 1932. Food prices on the other hand increased by nearly 20 per cent from the time of Hitler's rise to power to the beginning of 1938, and they have considerably increased since.

Working hours in the Third Reich have increased by 15 per cent up to 1938, and the further increase of 1939<sup>1</sup> is even more formidable, since in the months preceding the war the sixty-hour week became in many industries almost a minimum.

As to accidents, health-conditions, social insurance, etc., the German worker's position has also invariably and considerably worsened in the Third Reich, and while we have no space to go into any detail on such matters,<sup>2</sup> we had to skim at least the surface of real working conditions

<sup>1</sup> Official statistics not yet available.

<sup>2</sup> Readers interested in such detail are referred to Jürgen Kuczynski's *The Condition of the Workers in Great Britain, Germany and the Soviet Union 1932-1938*, whence the above-mentioned figures (based invariably on official statistics) are gleaned.

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so as to visualize the background on which the German workers, robbed of their legitimate Trade Unions, tried to look after their own interests by attempting some organized resistance within the factories.

The beginnings of organized obstruction within the factories can be traced as far back as April 1933, and it has continued with many ups and downs throughout the duration of the Nazi regime, reaching its pre-war peak in the summer of 1939 when, with working hours increased and rewards reduced out of all proportion, provocation went to yet unheard-of limits. It was at that time, during the regime's last desperate spurt in the armaments factories and in building the Siegfried Line, that organized "ca' canny" became a rule rather than an exception, and that the armament workers and those drafted for fortification labour exploited their indispensability by putting forward their more than reasonable demands.

It is difficult if not impossible to draw the line that distinguishes such activities as either serving the limited purpose of improving conditions, or as serving the political purpose of smashing Hitlerism. Actually, such a line should not be drawn at all; it so happens that such activities serve the one end directly and the other indirectly, by showing that the Opposition is still alive and by trying to achieve better living conditions which, again, would stiffen the workers' power of endurance as well as resistance and thus facilitate some more direct political activity.

Thus, in comparing the two main branches of concrete and positive oppositional work (as against the two other branches of mere organizing and precautionary measures), we come to the conclusion that both practical resistance within the factories and direct propaganda to the people serve the same political end.

When a group of worker sproduces and distributes an

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anti-Nazi leaflet they perform a direct political action; when the same group of workers offer resistance within the factory they also perform a political action, indirectly by strengthening its own power for future activity, and directly by weakening the Nazi regime through anything ranging from a mere slowing down of output to actual sabotage.

Considering the great importance of such practical resistance within the general frame-work of oppositional activity, it will be readily understood that enormous masses of evidence are available; as a matter of fact, an entire book could easily be filled merely by recording briefly the bare facts of each case known of active resistance against the Nazi regime within German factories.

But since we cannot even attempt anything approaching an exhaustive treatment of the subject, we must try to show the general atmosphere of the struggle by choosing at random a few cases from the masses of data available.<sup>1</sup>

Take, for instance, the case of a small Bremen dockyard, where fifty workers had been forced to do unpaid overtime for several weeks and, failing to get redress, decided one day to quit the yard at noon; they came back to work next morning, and since their work was irreplaceable, the Gestapo left them alone; even though they failed to get back-payment for past overtime it was arranged that it should in future be paid.

A similar and even more typical case happened in Brandenburg in the course of a particularly urgent erection of new military barracks. The workers were already on a sixty-hour week without overtime pay; when asked to work yet another two hours a day for nothing, they refused. When offered *half* their due overtime wage on the *ordinary*

<sup>1</sup> For reference to more detailed sources of information, see the bibliography at the end of this volume.

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rate (instead of the overtime rate) they still threatened to strike. The Nazi "Labour Front" (supposed to watch the workers' interests) was appealed to and could think of nothing better than the threat of sending the Gestapo forthwith, unless the workers acquiesced. Actually they were in a particularly dangerous situation because, being labelled *Wehr-Arbeiter*, they were sworn in under military law and quite liable to be tried for sabotage and shot. But that particular case had a happy ending; for someone higher up in the War Office sent word that at all costs the barracks must be ready by such-and-such a date, and that the workers should be paid without further ado.

A less successful but even more typical case happened in a brick-kiln where the workers had been reduced to the miserable wage of forty-six pfennigs per hour; they threatened to strike unless they were paid at the old minimum rate of fifty-two pfennigs per hour. The Labour Front, when asked to arbitrate, threatened to send a squad of Storm-troopers and have all the men packed off to a concentration camp. Nevertheless, thirty of the men dared to down tools for a day. They were *not* arrested (because they were needed); but neither did they get that miserable extra three-farthings per hour.

More than anything, the workers (and, in fact, 90 per cent of all Germans) resented the never-ending drain of deductions and "voluntary collections" for all sorts of Nazi Party funds, particularly the *Winterhilfe*.<sup>1</sup> In a Saxonian

<sup>1</sup> The "Winter-Relief" Fund was originally organized in the last (and particularly bitter) pre-Nazi winter, with the object of helping the poorest of the unemployed with some coal, clothing and food. When the Nazis came to power they should, by rights, have abolished that charitable fund, so as to live up to their boast of having eliminated unemployment and poverty. Instead, they boosted the fund to enormous proportions with plenty of ideological trimmings and with a spectacular show once a year, when Goring, Gobbels and other Nazi leaders in league with film stars and opera singers went round the streets with collection plates. But

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engine works employing five hundred men, the management one day circulated an enquiry as to which of the men were opposed to a special *Winterhilfe* drive being deducted from wages instead of being left (as it should be) to voluntary contribution. Eighty of the men had the courage to put their names down; whereupon the management circulated the list again with the urgent warning that "to serve the common weal as well as their own best interests the men were strongly advised to reconsider the matter and strike their names from the list"; not one of them did, but another forty added their names instead. The manager was worried rather than furious; for it was he who would get it in the neck from the Nazi superior who would inspect such poor results, with all their implications, regarding the "spirit" of his men. So the manager called every one of those hundred and twenty men to his office and almost implored them to give something, even ten pfennigs each, for the "Winter-Relief." The men refused; they said that their wives at home had to fill the Winter-Relief collection plate anyway, and that was quite enough. Very well, said the manager, he himself would pay the ten pfennigs for each of them; all he would ask of them was to strike their names from that list. The men still refused. In that same factory, by the way, and within the same week, a big Labour Front poster was torn down and burned, and in spite of severe grilling by the Gestapo the culprits were not given away.

As to the forcible deductions for Winter-Relief and other Party funds, the workers' resentment of that sort of thing the big money came out of the pennies deducted from every wage-envelope. Altogether, the fund collected some hundreds of millions of marks each year, a substantial portion of which went into the banking accounts and trouser-pockets of big and small Nazi leaders respectively—a great many of the small thieves have actually been tried in Nazi Courts for helping themselves to "Winter-Relief" money.

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used to express itself particularly strongly and frequently, and an enormous number of cases similar to that described is known.

One of the most significant yet amusing cases occurred in Upper Silesia in July 1936: "Labour Front Leader" Dr. Ley was to address a spectacular meeting in the mining-centre Hindenburg (a town formerly known by the good Polish name of Inowratzlay). The previous day but one happened to be pay-day in the near-by pit Ludwigsglück, and when the day-shift came on and collected their wage-envelopes they found twenty pfennigs missing and substituted by a badge which was to be worn on the day after the next, when the men would be shepherded to the big meeting to hear their "Labour Front Leader" address them. The miners threw away the badges and refused to go down the pit unless they got their twenty pfennigs first. The management telephoned for the Gestapo. Meanwhile the night-shift had come up and collected *their* wage-envelopes, like the others minus twenty pfennigs and plus a tin badge. They promptly joined in the other shift's uproar. More badges were thrown away. The Gestapo arrived and the day-shift still refused to go down. A few arrests were made. But the men were needed in the pit. Fresh orders were telephoned from headquarters. Most of those arrested were released. The twenty pfennigs were reimbursed. Two days later Dr. Ley had to address a badgeless audience; yet somehow sufficient "heil-ing" was arranged to make the newsreels sound impressive, and Göbbels' papers could once again report "a gigantic show of national-socialist discipline and unity."

Of practical solidarity between the workers many touching cases are known, such as the one in a Bavarian candle factory where a woman-worker, mother of four children, was dismissed because she had failed to raise her

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arm in the Hitler salute when, at some parade or other, the Horst Wessel Song<sup>1</sup> was played. The official reason for the dismissal was: "endangering the factory's security." Some of the workers attempted a little protest-strike to get the woman reinstated; but it led to nothing except the arrest of two or three of the men. It was a long time before the woman found work elsewhere, but meanwhile the workers of that factory clubbed together and supported her.

An even more startling (and politically more significant) case of solidarity happened in Berlin when the street-sweepers refused to pay their Labour Front dues. A few of the S.A. Storm-troopers sent to arrest them refused to do so, stating that the wages were so miserable that the men could not possibly pay their contributions. The result was that the Storm-troopers and the street-sweepers landed in a concentration camp together.

A particularly tragic and, in a way, rather significant case occurred in the Kolbermoor cotton-mill in Bavaria. Among that factory's four hundred workers was one elderly man who had been in the firm's employ for more than fifteen years and who was very popular with all his fellow-workers but one, a foreman, an out-and-out Nazi who went out of his way to bully the others and particularly that elderly man against whom he had some personal grudge. The man was, with all his kindness, a typically Bavarian hothead, and after some specially nasty chicanery on the part of the Nazi foreman he lost his temper and shouted something about bashing the fellow's head in if he continued to nag at him like that. The foreman reported the matter to the management, and the man (a father of three young children) was instantly dismissed. He took it so to heart that he went straightway to a near-by wood and hanged himself. The workers of that factory were furious and, to a man, they

<sup>1</sup> The Nazi's own anthem—named after the notorious pimp. See p. 59.

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rose against the Nazi foreman, called him a murderer and demanded his dismissal. The (non-Nazi) management under pressure from the Nazi Labour Front refused. Whereupon the workers started a few hours' sit-down strike. Storm-troopers were called in, but no arrests were made. Finally the Nazi foreman was dismissed; moreover, he got a sound thrashing on the night before he left the district.

Less grim, but in many ways rather typical of the way the workers stand up for their rights in small matters, was a case that happened in the course of some excavation work near Pirk in Vogtland, Saxony. The particular work on hand necessitated dynamiting the rocks once or twice a day; each of those explosions caused a ten-minutes' break of work, and the management had decided that those ten minutes were to be deducted from the men's ordinary morning and dinner breaks. That irked the men, and in the week from November 13 to 20, 1936, they decided to stay away from work their full dinner-break. The management at once called for the Gestapo, and some severe grilling took place to discover the "ring-leaders." No one gave them away. Mass arrests were threatened; but in the end nothing much happened, and the men stuck to their full breaks in future.

It is most unlikely that in this particular case active members of the organized underground opposition took anything but a benevolently contemplative part; for them it was a basic principle never to expose themselves in minor matters; they would not, for the sake of a curtailed dinner-break, risk suspicion, possible arrest and stoppage of their more important activities.<sup>1</sup> They had to exercise considerable self-control and very often they had to subdue their natural instincts.

<sup>1</sup> Yet they never neglect any of such "minor" grievances, the cumulative effect of which, after all, is one of the "major" grievances which it is their job to try and remedy. But, of course, they never expose themselves unnecessarily.



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There is a case known, for instance, concerning a Bavarian weaving-mill, where a particularly obnoxious Nazi speaker of the Labour Front addressed a command meeting of those workers on the blessings of the Hitler regime. Now, for some reason or other, those weavers happened that day to be particularly infuriated and when the speaker went to the length of calling their present condition "a paradise on earth" some of them lost their temper, and interruptions like "Shut up" and "We've heard such rubbish before" were freely heard. Finally the heckling became so general that the speaker had to retire in confusion. Meanwhile, the management had phoned for the Gestapo, and three or four of the hecklers were arrested. But it is significant that, although in this particular factory there happened to be several organized "cells" of active underground fighters, not one of them had joined in the heckling. They knew better than risk concentration camp and jeopardize all their real political work for the mere pleasure of giving some Nazi boss a piece of their mind.

Not that they would shirk risks when it was a matter of real importance; a chance, maybe, of remedying some particular grievance or, better still, a chance to spread the movement within the cadres of the enemy. As a matter of fact, as the oppositional underground struggle progressed in volume and intensity it became more and more a regular principle to send particularly reliable, shrewd and unsuspected men right into the enemy camp; they would join one of the various Nazi organizations, with the idea of disintegrating them by what, after the Spanish war, was commonly called "Fifth Column Tactics"<sup>1</sup> in lieu of the age-old simile of the Trojan Horse.

<sup>1</sup> When Franco's General Mola first approached Madrid with four Army Columns he boasted to have, within the heart of the city, a fifth column which would decide the issue in a few days

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The Opposition's most fertile field for recruiting from the enemy was, undoubtedly, the vast organization of the S.A.<sup>1</sup> (Brownshirt) Storm-troops who, at their peak, numbered close on three millions, the majority of whom were disbanded after the June 30th "purge" of 1934, when their Chief, Ernst Röhm, and dozens of other S.A. leaders were murdered. What that event's repercussions meant for the underground opposition we will have to examine at greater length in the subsequent historical survey.

Anyway, while a considerable number of Brownshirts in time became staunch and active supporters of the Opposition (with quite a few others playing a double game as Gestapo spies also), the vast majority of these men were simply ill-paid workers with the more or less accidental status of membership of the Nazi Party and ex-membership of the Brownshirts; it was among these men particularly that the Opposition leaders tried to rouse (and, if possible, activate) some solidarity with their fellow-workers. Nor was this very difficult; for, after all, they were all in the same boat, suffering very much the same privations and oppressions.

Thus, whenever occasion arose for some concerted action to try and improve certain conditions in certain factories, the Opposition leaders would if possible avail themselves of a spearhead of such fellow-workers who happened to have the stigma (or, in the bosses' eyes, the distinction) of party-membership or ex-Brownshirt status. In many cases such tactics proved very useful indeed.

But it was not always so; there was, to quote only one of many similar cases, that abortive strike in 1936 in a Saxonian armament works specializing in airplane motors.

<sup>1</sup> As distinct from the S.S. Blackshirts who are more "select" and exclusively used to staff Himmler's Gestapo.

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When working conditions in that factory became unbearable 150 men, including 40 S.A. men and 20 former S.S. men, went on strike. In that particular case (evidently because the men did not happen to be absolutely indispensable at the moment) the authorities were quite ruthless and arrested them all; but whilst the ninety non-Nazis were soon released and given other work elsewhere, the former Storm-troopers were most brutally beaten up and ended in a concentration camp.

It is often asked how, with such intense and widespread unrest and hatred, the Nazis could hold down open revolution for so many years. The simple answer is that it is extremely difficult to prevail with bare fists against machine-guns. It is one thing for a man suddenly to down tools and bravely shout "Down with Hitler," with the certain knowledge that he will be arrested in a minute with no appreciable object served; yet it is quite another thing for that same man deliberately to slow work down and to do as much sabotaging as he possibly can without instant detection.

This is exactly what German workers did (and are doing) to an ever-increasing extent; there was, for example, the well-known case of Pit "Görlitz" near Kohlfurt in the Silesian mining district; the machinery of that pit was almost completely wrecked by sabotage. There were hundreds of similar cases, some of which will be dealt with in the historical survey.

Generally speaking, it can be said that, ever since November 1938 the movement steadily gained in volume and intensity, with a particular spurt in the months immediately preceding the war.

How and to what lengths it was continued during the war will be the subject of the final chapter.

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### *Propaganda*

It goes without saying that from the very beginning propaganda has been the opposition's chief weapon in its struggle against Nazidom. The whole Opposition has realized that to a large extent it was propaganda that had helped Hitler into power, and that to no less an extent propaganda would be needed to smash him.

But between Hitler's spell of opposition against successive Republican governments and the opposition against his own spell of power there was this difference: the Nazis, growing from strength to strength in their fourteen years of opposition, were dealing with extremely liberal Governments, which gave them unrestricted freedom of action and practically unlimited facilities for propaganda of the most subversive kind.

But once in power the Nazis dealt with the opposition to their own regime in a very different way: by driving it underground at once, by killing or gaoling every leader they could lay hands on, and by merciless persecution by the most ruthless and efficient police force ever conceived.

Had the various liberal governments handled their Nazi opposition with one tithe of the severity later shown themselves, the Nazi Party could never have survived.<sup>1</sup> Had the Nazis, once in power, conceded their opposition one tithe of the liberties they used to enjoy themselves, their regime could not have lasted a week.

Hitler and his henchmen realized all this; they knew full well that only by brute force and instant suppression of even the ghost of open opposition they could maintain themselves in power; and since to maintain themselves in power was consistently their one and only object they used

<sup>1</sup> It was not until 1932 that Hitler (by means of an amusing trick) secured German nationality. For a long time it would have been simple to expel him as an undesirable alien.

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brute force as only they knew how to use it. And it certainly was necessary; they knew that only with the bayonet could they feel relatively safe, and whether they did or did not know of the old adage that one can do many things with bayonets except sit on them, they certainly tried hard enough to do even this, and for six and a half years they have just managed to do it.

All this must be borne in mind when trying to realize the enormous difficulties which the underground opposition was up against in organizing and maintaining nation-wide propaganda. For anyone born and bred in an atmosphere of even the most ordinary civic liberties, it requires a great deal of imagination to understand that to be found even glancing at an opposition paper (let alone printing or distributing one) would mean instant arrest, with an indefinite term of concentration camp to follow, some form of torture almost a certainty, and some form of death penalty<sup>1</sup> a far from remote contingency.

In such circumstances, obviously, the opposition could not even attempt organized propaganda without making extreme caution its first and foremost consideration.

As far as the production and distribution of printed or multigraphed material was concerned the basic precautionary principle was, from the start, a rigid separation of the three essential working groups: editorial; technical production; distribution.

The printers were not to know who had written the copy they worked on, and they in turn had to use intermediaries to pass the finished product on to distributors who neither knew where the printing or multigraphing machinery was hidden, nor who were the men responsible for editorial and technical production. The less they knew of all this the less

<sup>1</sup> Anything from "legalized" beheading to "being suicided" or "shot while trying to escape."

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they were in danger of yielding under torture when arrested by the Gestapo.

For obviously the distributors' job, though superficially the lowliest of the three, was in reality the most hazardous one, requiring infinite courage, initiative, perspicacity and presence of mind.

Moreover, whilst, even on a nation-wide basis, a few hundreds of experienced and highly qualified men were sufficient for all requirements of editorial and technical production, distributors were soon needed in their thousands and later in their tens of thousands; a great many of them, from the early days, were women.

Besides, while the editors and producers could do their work in the relative security of cleverly camouflaged and carefully guarded hide-outs, the distributors had to venture forth into the open, incurring infinitely greater risks than any other kind of active worker in the underground movement. They were, to use a military simile, hardly ever in a safe dug-out and almost continuously under shell fire. Nor, for their greater risks, was the penalty they had to face commensurately smaller; it mattered little in the Gestapo's torture chambers whether a person had been caught printing a leaflet, distributing it, or merely reading it. Any such person, one way or the other, was doomed.

It is thus easily conceivable that by far the greatest casualties the movement had to mourn came from the ranks of the distributors, particularly so in the early months when many avoidable mistakes occurred through lack of experience, by too careless distribution and by unguarded discussions in houses where the Gestapo had planted one of their innumerable stoolpigeons and spies.

That is why, as early as August 1933, a detailed set of rules was worked out for the guidance of distributors; many

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of these rules were based on bitter lessons learned through earlier mistakes. Here is a short summary:

Avoid knocking at doors or ringing bells. Put leaflets quietly in front of doors or shove them under.

If there is time and no risk attached, fix one leaflet to the door with glue or drawing pins; then vanish.

Don't go from one house to the one next door. Go to the one opposite, then skip two and go back to the other side of the street.

Carry leaflets under your clothes, folded and ready to be delivered without fuss or delay.

Try to be taken for a travelling salesman or hawker.

Whenever it can be done without undue risk leave a few leaflets on window-sills.

Time your visits so as not to coincide with the baker's boy, the milkman, etc.

Wherever possible, hide leaflets between the pages of newspapers delivered to the door.

Try to use envelopes with the imprint of well-known firms.

Put leaflets between all the pages of a Sunday paper or magazine and "forget" this on a bus, in a post office, or at the grocer's or butcher's. Someone is bound to "collect."

If it can be done without undue risk insert leaflets in the newspaper containers kept at cafés.

The roofs of corner-houses are particularly suitable for throwing masses of leaflets on to two streets as well as the surrounding courtyards.

Wherever, particularly in small towns, the Gestapo has threatened reprisals if and when leaflets are found to have been distributed, see to it that all those who might be under suspicion are conspicuous at some public place and thus have a good alibi at a definite time when those not under suspicion make a concerted effort to distribute as many leaflets as possible.

Ever since these general rules were devised and strictly observed, casualties among distributors have been con-

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siderably reduced, even though that branch of the movement has throughout remained a relatively easy prey for the Gestapo. )

Apart from routine work on well-trying and established lines, many distributors showed considerable ingenuity and pluck in conceiving and performing special individual exploits.

One of the most effective of these was the feat of a young man who had managed to borrow a very fast motor-cycle. Having carefully disguised the number-plate he packed a basket full of leaflets and then, tearing down some streets of a Berlin suburb at break-neck speed, he dropped his missiles everywhere. The Gestapo never caught him, in spite of some feverish efforts to try and trace both man and machine.

Less daring, though certainly no less effective, was the idea of hanging bundles of leaflets tied with a quick-match to a number of toy-balloons, which in due time discharged their dangerous burdens all over a town.

Another cunning and effective little exploit was performed by two young men who, in the dead of night, managed to hoist a huge flag to the top of a public building in Hamburg. The flag bore, in five-foot letters, the legend "Down with Hitler." What added effect to the exploit was the fact that the last stretch of the climb to where the flag was fixed was only accessible by means of a built-in iron ladder of some fifty steps, of which, as he clambered down, the young man took care to smear every step with wet soap. This fully achieved the desired object of hampering the police, and it took them almost two hours to remove the flag from the sight of the huge crowds assembling to see a "Down with Hitler" slogan defiantly floating over Nazi Hamburg. For days afterwards the incident was the talk of the city, and this indeed was the particular value of such



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and other more spectacular exploits: to show as many people as possible that the Opposition was still alive.)

Those who have never lived in a totalitarian state may well look upon such exploits with condescension, as they would the pranks of small boys on some particularly unpopular teacher; yet it must be borne in mind that the underground political struggle against a dictatorship necessarily assumes unconventional forms and produces incidents at once ludicrous and sublime.

On June 24, 1933, all the Nazi Press appeared with screaming headlines "Foreign Airplanes dropping Marxist Leaflets over Berlin," and for a day or two the allegation (quickly refuted by all the Powers concerned) was front-page news throughout the world. To most Berliners the "mystery" had never been mysterious at all. What had happened was that, on the 23rd and in broad daylight, thousands of anti-Nazi leaflets had been released from the roof of Karstadt's, one of the biggest of Berlin's department stores. A fast increasing crowd watched those leaflets gaily fluttering down to the streets and gleefully observed the Gestapo's frantic (but vain) efforts to catch the perpetrators. Meanwhile, it took the police hours to collect all leaflets from the street, that is, all those that had not found their way already into the pockets of Berliners. That night, embarrassed by the incident, reports of which were spreading like wildfire, the Nazi authorities launched the rather clumsy story of the "foreign airplanes.")

Much of the routine distribution of leaflets went, of course, to the factories, one of the favourite methods being to put the material straight at the men's working places during one of the frequent occasions when they were all shepherded to the main hall to listen to the broadcast of a Hitler speech or an address by one of his paladins.

One of the more subtle methods of distribution was to

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stick every page of a suitably sized pamphlet on to a roll of toilet paper, taking, of course, good care that the first half-dozen or so perforated sheets remained in their unsuspectingly blank state. Word would then go round quickly that a "loaded roll" was available, and the workers of that factory would seek their earliest opportunity of acquainting themselves with the material in the secure privacy vouchsafed by circumstances and surroundings. After a day or two of useful duty, the precious roll would be planted in some other factory.

Generally speaking, it may be said that most of the underground opposition's work was, from the start, on a collective basis; indeed, collective work was not merely encouraged but frequently insisted on by the leaders of the movement.

Yet there are quite a few cases known of individual propagandist efforts, generally as a result of feelings roused through first contact with some particularly brutal form of oppression. Thus from time to time a man would vent his feelings and produce, singlehanded, a few dozen copies of a leaflet circulated among his friends. Such efforts, though often pathetically inadequate in grammar, composition and production, would easily make up for such deficiencies by their ring of passionate sincerity.

From a village in Upper Silesia, in the autumn of 1933, came a hand-written leaflet, in a very clumsy hand too, and by no means free of errors of grammar and spelling. And yet, so eloquent is the document's passionate breath of sincerity that it is all but impossible to convey its gist and tone in printed translation:

I am a simple working man, not a journalist and not an editor. I should like to express all my hatred against the Hitler-Bandits. But I haven't the words for it yet. Next time it'll be better. There will be other leaflets to come. To-day I just want to tell

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my fellow-workers one thing: we must unite, and we must fight!

There is another case known of an individual effort on the part of a Berlin policeman who, having professionally witnessed the murder of John Schehr, Eugen Schönhaar, Erich Steinfurth and Rudolf Schwarz,<sup>1</sup> was so disgusted with the regime that he came over into the "other camp, starting his activities with a leaflet, a few dozen copies of which he produced single-handed; in that leaflet he describes the ghastly scenes he had witnessed and refers to Göring and Diehls (one of the Police Chiefs personally responsible for that particular crime) as "bloody murderers."

Yet another one such case of individual effort happened immediately after the famous Nazi "purge" of June 30, 1934. In those days one of the S.A. Storm-troopers, embittered by the murder of so many of his comrades, approached one of the underground socialists whom he happened to know and actually solicited his help for the composition of an anti-Hitler leaflet which he then proceeded to produce single-handed and to distribute among his Storm-troop battalion.

It can be readily imagined that such work, often literally single-handed, could be only very primitive so far as technical production was concerned; but many of the more ambitious collective efforts could not do very much better

<sup>1</sup> These four men (two of whom were ex-members of the Reichstag and the Prussian Diet respectively) were tortured by the Gestapo with appalling cruelty, and on February 2, 1934, at a little place near Potsdam, they were "shot while trying to escape." All their wounds, though, were in the chest and abdomen. None in the back. Moreover, there has since been direct evidence that they were murdered in the notorious cellars of the Berlin *Columbia Haus*, and that their bodies were dumped near the open road, merely with a view to "substantiating" the "escape" story.

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in this respect. Not every cell, nor even every district could boast of a really first-class modern multigraphing machine, let alone facilities for printing.

It was not always merely a question of money, though this was scarce enough most of the time.<sup>1</sup> But even where the funds for acquiring proper machinery were available the underground propagandists had to go about their work most warily, and even paper, in order to allay suspicion, was invariably bought in very small quantities and at a great variety of shops, and generally by the womenfolk.

From the very earliest days of the regime, the Gestapo maintained a rigid control over all firms selling printing and mimeographing machinery and all the implements connected with it. Very soon it was impossible for oppositionists to acquire that sort of material directly or even second-hand. Invariably subterfuge and a great many intermediaries had to be used.

In the course of time the movement resorted more and more to the expedient of producing its own machinery, which was found to be at once the safest and the most economical course. As early as autumn, 1933, a great many widely circulated "illegal" booklets contained detailed directions and diagrams for private construction of cheap and efficient multigraphing machinery.

But regardless of whether it was the most primitive of hand-scrawled one-page leaflets, distributed among a few dozens, or whether it was a tidily bound brochure, multigraphed in hundreds of copies, or an elaborate photostat miniature copy of the big "Brown-book," smuggled in from abroad, complete with pictures, cleverly camouflaged with a harmless cover and circulated in thousands, all this

<sup>1</sup> To a considerable extent "home-made" propaganda material was self-financed by selling leaflets at prices varying from the equivalent of a ha'penny to fourpence.

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enormous mass of material, distributed and read in constant danger to life and limb, produced by and for people harassed and hunted by day and by night, all this served and serves one and the same object: to smash and root out Hitlerism and to bring liberty, decency and dignity back to Germany and the Germans.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### “Illegal” Literature

To attempt anything even approaching a complete analysis of anti-Nazi literature illegally circulated in the Third Reich would fill a sizeable library rather than one chapter of a book.

The collection which happened to be available to me is very far from complete, and yet it consists of nineteen huge scrapbooks of some fifty pages each, with several items on each page—items ranging from short leaflets, by way of hundreds of brochures of from ten to thirty thousand words, to a camouflaged miniature edition of the hundred-thousand word *Brownbook of the Hitler Terror*. At a very rough estimate, the aggregate contained in that one (very far from complete) collection would be anything between thirty and thirty-five million words. As to the size of the editions in which those various miniature brochures and booklets are circulating, they vary from the few dozen copies of a primitive multigraphed leaflet to the many thousands of copies of some elaborate photostat (diminutive) book smuggled in from abroad.

Some idea of the volume of illegal literature circulating in the Third Reich can also be obtained from official Nazi sources, by looking at the reports of the Exchequer's special department, which combines the duties of stopping currency from being smuggled out of the country and illegal literature from being smuggled in. As many as 14,823 such

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cases, according to statistics issued by that department, were dealt with by the frontier authorities in the one year 1937. In 426 of these cases "fire-arms had to be used," according to the text of that Nazi report which concluded:

The customs officials are not merely the guardians of German currency, but also the protectors of the German people against various poisons in the shape of propaganda literature and propagandists, which certain criminal centres beyond the frontiers of the Reich are trying to inject into the German community.

Statistically speaking, the "various poisons" mentioned included such items as *The Times*, coming from so notorious a "criminal centre" as Printing House Square, London, E.C.4, though, as a matter of fact, that venerable paper was not nearly as often and consistently banned as, for instance, the *Manchester Guardian* or some of the better known politico-literary periodicals published in London, Paris, New York and elsewhere.

It may be taken for granted that stray copies of such papers and periodicals brought in by unsuspecting foreign travellers formed the bulk of the "27,717 confiscations of prohibited or suspected publications" mentioned in the report as part of the total of 120,286 confiscations effected by frontier police in the course of 1937.

It may be equally taken for granted that the balance of more than ninety thousand confiscations fell almost exclusively under the heading of "real" illegal literature; but it is almost a certainty that the 426 cases of shooting concerned exclusively the "propagandists" mentioned in the report—brave men and women who, in all sorts of disguises and in constant danger of their lives, kept up a regular courier service between their enslaved, gagged and sealed homeland and the outer world. They were, in many ways, the direct intermediaries between those Germans waging their

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ceaseless underground struggle within the Reich and those in exile and their manifold foreign friends who supported it from abroad.

Almost immediately after Hitler's rise to power and the beginnings of organized resistance from within, active assistance and various forms of moral and material support began to be forthcoming from abroad. It was first organized by some of those opposition leaders who had succeeded in escaping the first wave of mass-arrests following the Reichstag fire, and it received almost at once most valuable help from various liberal, socialist and independent personalities and bodies; in Britain, France and America, in the Low Countries and Scandinavia, in the Soviet Union, and last not least, in Czechoslovakia, then still a haven of liberty.

That the majority of political refugees turned first to Prague was rather obvious in view of the vicinity and comparative ease of crossing the frontier illegally near one of the numerous mountain passes. Yet it was a matter of luck mostly, and quite a number were caught. Nor was it always easy to keep up contact between Prague and, say, Paris; particularly so after Austria had fallen to the Nazis. Refugees always had to seek routes which avoided their own country, and when flying they had to choose a 'plane that would not stop on Nazi territory. The author knows of one political refugee on whose head the Gestapo had put a big price and who, when flying over Germany, had the bad luck of a forced landing. The other passengers used the unforeseen stop to get out, stretch their legs and have some refreshment. The refugee could not do so; his face was too well known and Nazi officials hovered around in dangerous proximity. On the other hand, to stay in the cabin might look even more suspicious. On the spur of the moment the refugee conceived a plan which probably saved his life: he happened to glance towards the Czech radio



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operator who was just getting out for a stretch while the slight engine trouble was being put right. Their glances met: the Czech understood the silent plea and winked at the refugee, who quickly slipped into the operator's seat, donned his earphones and pretended to fuss around the instruments. After a few minutes which seemed to my friend an eternity, and on the soil of his own country too, the plane rose into free air, heading towards liberty.

After the fall of Czechoslovakia, most of the opposition's support from abroad was centred in Paris, though a great many of the political refugees found a haven in Britain.

Ever since 1933, all over the civilized world, various anti-Nazi organizations have sprung up, comprising German political *émigrés* as well as a great many non-German scientists, writers, artists, politicians, in fact almost all leaders of thought in every free country.

Several of such organizations, noteworthy among them the "American Guild for German Cultural Freedom" and London's "Free German League of Culture" and *Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler*, have made it their business to serve the cultural rather than the political angle; others, like the "Friends of the German People's Front" in London or the *Aktions-Ausschuss Deutscher Oppositioneller* in Paris, are of a more political nature. Yet, it is impossible (and in fact unnecessary) to draw a line between them; for whoever during those years continued to remind the world that the real Germany, the one we have cause to admire, is either driven into exile, or gagged and tied within its own land, and desperately trying to shake off the gangster yoke; whoever, German or non-German, gave of his time and strength to help to spread these facts, performed a political action and, in so doing, helped towards the goal of destroying Hitlerism and regaining Germany for the German people.

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There have also been, all these years, numbers of direct political actions in opposition to the Nazi regime and sponsored by non-Germans of international renown. One of the most noteworthy of such actions was the work of the "Legal Commission of Inquiry into the burning of the Reichstag," which sat in London in September 1933<sup>1</sup> and did most painstaking and useful work in sifting the evidence of that Nazi crime, rousing world opinion and thus ensuring that the Leipzig Trial, faced by a suspicious world audience, could not go to its planned limits. Moreover, those famous lawyers' arduous work, inspired merely by a true and fierce sense of justice, gave tremendous moral support and encouragement to those actively engaged in their underground struggle within the Reich.

In considering foreign support, directly or indirectly, of the German struggle for freedom we must not forget numerous charitable organizations which soon sprang up in all civilized countries; such as London's "Relief Committee for the Victims of Hitler-Fascism," or the incalculable help rendered by the Society of Friends as well as the German Jewish Aid Committee. Whilst these are obviously serving a charitable rather than a political end, the line cannot clearly be drawn even there. It was not merely that, by helping Hitler's victims, they made them fit again for active oppositional work; more vital was the considerable moral support they gave the movement through the very fact that they united under their banner world-renowned men and women of every political hue—united merely in their burning desire to help the Oppressed against the Oppressors.

<sup>1</sup> The Commission, under the chairmanship of D. N. Pritt, K.C. (England), consisted of (Madame) Dr. Bakker-Nort (Holland), Maître Gaston Bergery (France), Georg Branting (Sweden), A. Garfield Hays (U.S.A.), Vald Hvidt (Denmark), Maître Moro-Giafferi (France), Maître Pierre Vermeyley (Belgium).

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While organizations of that kind were, of course, almost exclusively organized and financed by non-Germans, the political refugees themselves could obviously serve their country's cause best by spreading their own very special knowledge and experience of Nazidom. Soon a considerable number of *émigré* papers and periodicals came into existence, and though not all of them could survive, quite a few did persevere in the face of dire poverty and extraordinary difficulties. Almost all of them served a most useful purpose, for which future historians will be thankful; day by day and week by week they had to study developments within the country from which they were exiled, read between the lines of the Nazi Press, nail down the contradictions of Nazi statistics and, most important of all, help to maintain contacts with the active Opposition at home.

Some of these small and struggling *émigré* papers were a most valuable (though often ignored) source of information to the big international Press, and almost all of them could now have the melancholy pleasure of saying: "I told you so!" They have for five or six years been saying things that only now are generally accepted, but few of those in power listened while it was still quite simple to destroy Hitlerism without bloodshed. To prophesy Nazi developments was, indeed, not difficult for any who had the misfortune of intimate knowledge of Nazi methods and insight into the workings of the Nazi mind.

Even more important than the more or less independent *émigré* papers were the official monthly publications which the two German Socialist parties issued regularly from their headquarters in exile, first Prague and later Paris. Almost every one of these publications exceeds fifty thousand words in length, sparing in opinion, but crammed full with authenticated reports, facts, figures and official data. To

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collate all this, in the face of extreme difficulty, must have required more than infinite patience and labour; it was dangerous too, and, alas! a great many of the reports brought out of the Gestapo-ridden Reich had to be paid for with the blood of those who brought them. The reader will recall the Nazi statistics mentioned earlier, according to which, in the one year 1937, "fire-arms had to be used" in four hundred and twenty-six cases when frontier police intercepted "propaganda literature and propagandists." Each of those shots was to stop some item of truth entering or leaving Germany, and it is the many thousands which did get out that are now filling those small coarsely-printed, paper-bound volumes, indispensable to any who, now or in future, wish to study the history of the Third Reich and the incessant underground struggle waged against it within its own frontiers.

Of whatever support it has been possible to give the underground struggle from abroad, the most directly useful and politically effective is obviously the supply (and smuggling) of propaganda material. Very considerable quantities have, indeed, entered Germany from abroad, generally those of a more elaborate kind, such as photostat miniature copies of books or other productions whose technical difficulties would have added too much to the general handicaps and dangers of those working within the Reich.

As to the quantities of material smuggled in, the reader remembering the Nazi statistics already quoted can well imagine that, with something like one hundred thousand confiscations in the one year 1937, the amount of material escaping the vigilance of frontier police must have been infinitely greater.

Moreover, though Nazi statistics are not available for later years, it is quite certain that in 1938 and particularly in 1939 the influx of propaganda material rose to unprece-

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dented volume, the best evidence for this being the material we actually know to exist.

Since, obviously, we cannot attempt anything like an exhaustive review of that "illegal literature," since in fact a mere enumeration of titles would go beyond the scope of this book, all we can do is to take a few dozen typical examples from the thousands available and in a cursory inspection try to convey an impression of the general circumstances, the tone and atmosphere of such propaganda.

To serve a useful purpose within the Third Reich, propaganda material must fulfil two basic requirements: it must be as minute as possible and well "camouflaged." With the vigilant Gestapo everywhere, it would not do to flaunt a book with the title "Down with Hitler." Nor, even apart from considerations of expense, would it do to have "illegal literature" in the form of bulky volumes. For one thing, they would be even more difficult to smuggle across the frontier, and for another, they have to be tiny so as to slip easily into any pocket and to be just as easily thrown away in an emergency.

As to "camouflage," considerable ingenuity has to be employed; to which is added quite often a grim sense of humour.

Not every item of "illegal literature" enters the Reich in the shape of a booklet. It may quite well appear as a tea sample. As a matter of fact, one of the most neatly produced miniature photostats of a brochure containing dozens of anti-Nazi articles from eminent German writers reached the German people concealed within a Lyons tea sample which, under the outer-flap, actually contained a little tea. Similarly, many small sample packets purporting to advertise popular brands of flour, baking-powder, shampoos, etc., have been used for hiding illegal literature, and an even more convenient and frequent form of camou-

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flage were the little envelopes generally used by stamp-collectors.

A classic piece of camouflage is a little leaflet displaying pictures of a well-known Black Forest health resort on its front and back pages. Every English tourist knows these folders. Even when it is opened nothing more harmful can be seen than three further photos of the beautiful German landscape and on the inner-flap a map of the environs and a list of hotels and *pensions* recommended for good service and reasonable terms. It is only when the inner-flap is turned back that an inspiring appeal to all Germans by Heinrich Mann is revealed.

One of the general principles invariably observed for that kind of camouflage is that the leaflet or sample-packet chosen must be popular enough to render it inconspicuous. Exactly the same principle holds good for the very much more frequent use of a booklet without any form of outer camouflage beyond its title. Efforts at this direct form of camouflage were greatly facilitated by the fortunate fact that the German book-market has always been flooded with a great variety of very cheap and extremely popular miniature editions. There is hardly one of the classics of German and foreign literature that cannot be obtained in one of those cheap, flimsy, paper-bound pocket editions, to say nothing of an even greater variety of little booklets disseminating elementary knowledge on a variety of subjects, such as gardening, radio, combustion-motors, etc. These extremely popular little brochures are conspicuous for their familiar paper covers, and they were obviously most suitable as a camouflage for illegal propaganda.

Quite often, the opposition went even further by actually using for their purpose some of the more popular Nazi pamphlets; for obviously these familiar covers would better than any others obviate suspicion. For instance, a much

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publicized booklet, with Göring's handsome profile on the cover, was used; when it is opened, on the first few pages an introduction to Göring's biography in a particularly lick-spittle style is found; but when a later page is turned there begins, quite abruptly, a ten-thousand word *résumé* of the Reichstag fire, containing a clear alibi for the Communists and all the evidence pointing to the guilt of the Nazis and of Göring in particular.

Very much the same rather grim sense of humour is seen in the choice of a widely publicized Nazi booklet entitled *Bekenntnisse deutscher Mädels zum Nationalsozialismus* (German girls speak out for Nazism), as a cover for a strong anti-Nazi brochure containing evidence to the contrary effect, such as a report of how, at the Stettin railway station, hundreds of women and girls staged a violent anti-Nazi demonstration when five hundred young men, mostly their own sons, brothers and lovers, were taken away to do forced labour in some other region. The same brochure includes letters from girls debunking the much-romanticized Nazi Labour Camps and reporting the true conditions in which the young men and girls are there exploited and put into spiritual strait-jackets. That brochure also describes a case reported in the *Rheinisch-Westphälische Zeitung* of July 5, 1934, of how twenty-four youths and nine girls, accused of anti-Nazi activity, bared their arms and chests in the Court to show their scars, and shouted of the way they had been maltreated in the camps. The Nazi paper, of course, commented that these wounds were self-inflicted; but the brochure gives detailed evidence as to the true events. All of which must surely make interesting reading under a cover and title-page littered with swastikas and "love-the-Führer" sentiments of Nazi girls. ✓

A considerable amount of pacifist literature has been disguised under the covers of a complete series of ultra-

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nationalist pocket volumes entitled *Deutsche im Weltkrieg* (Germans in the World-war). On the first and last few pages of each of those camouflaged booklets you can still read jingoistic descriptions of certain submarine and aerial exploits, but the inner pages contain something quite different.

One of the most widely publicized booklets of the Nazi Eher-Verlag (of which Hitler is a 51 per cent shareholder) is called *Besucht das schöne Nürnberg* (Come to beautiful Nuremberg); turn over the first few pages of glorification for the annual Nazi Congress, and you are right in the middle of a reported speech by Ellen Wilkinson on the occasion of the European Congress held at Brussels in July 1936 to plead for an amnesty for political prisoners within the Third Reich. In the same little brochure there are reports of stirring anti-Nazi speeches by the Swiss lawyer Dr. Rosenbusch, Sonja Branting of Stockholm, and Rudolf Breitscheid, an exiled German Social Democrat.

The same subtle humour in the juxtaposition of opposites is revealed in a booklet which makes use of the cover of a Nazi brochure on the Austrian "Hitler-Youth," but actually describes the real state of things in post-"Anschluss" Austria, as documented by the letters of Austrian mothers.

There is a booklet purporting to contain "Practical Hints for the Farmer," but which in reality contains facts regarding the oppression of German farmers by the Nazis; also a pamphlet camouflaged as the Nazi *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, containing an appeal to ensure Germany's real "rejuvenation" once the Nazis have been deposed.

There is another booklet which tells the German women many facts about the Labour Camps and their men-folks' mobilization for the army and for forced labour on the Western fortifications, all disguised by the cover of a popular cheap booklet on "what every house-wife should



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know," the first few pages actually reproducing suggestions as to how to cure one's dog of distemper and how to organize one's spring-cleaning.

But subtlest of all is one that usurps the familiar cover of a popular miniature edition of "All Sorts of Funny Stories from the Nursery." The first page is identical with that of the original publication and reads thus:

Little Werner is admired by all his uncles and aunts and friends on account of his beautiful big eyes. Werner's elder brother Fritz, not so lucky or handsome, resents this, and being really a much better boy he says:

Having read that far it so happens you must turn the page. But the reader will never find what Fritz had to say to Werner and the relatives, for there follows a twenty thousand word description, with a wealth of facts and figures, on how the "Hitler Youth" may spoil a generation of German boys for real life.

The foregoing examples were selected at random from the whole length of the Hitler regime, but it might be well to take a look at the earliest beginnings of "illegal literature."

The first effort appeared in April 1933, with a camouflage devoid of the subtle humour and symbolism of later days; it happened to possess the cover of a miniature booklet entitled "Health-giving Pot-herbs." You would have thought that this first piece of "underground" work, written, produced and distributed in the face of appalling risks and difficulties, with the memory still fresh of thousands of comrades murdered, gaoled, tortured, would have been full of such grim tidings, a passionate account and a stirring appeal to the German people. It was nothing of the kind; it contained nothing but a vehement attack by the Communists on the Social Democrats. It was answered

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with equal vehemence. It was, of course, this very discord between the two Socialist Parties (and again between them and the more progressive forms of Liberalism) which had been the premise of Hitler's triumph; and since everybody (including Hitler) knew very well that only by removing that premise could Hitler be removed, it did not take long for many members of the various opposition forces to see that to bury their hatchets and unite in their common struggle against Hitler was their one and only chance of success.

The first plea for the *Einheitsfront* (Popular Front) was recorded as an "underground" pamphlet as early as May 1933, and the next month saw an even stronger appeal to all the members of the Trade Unions disbanded by Hitler only a few weeks earlier. But before that, in the last week of April, the first example of real "illegal literature" had appeared; by which is meant one that was aimed directly and exclusively at Hitler. This was a vivid and well authenticated description of how the Nazis (earlier that month) had murdered their own Party-member Dr. Bell, who was directly involved<sup>1</sup> in the Reichstag fire conspiracy. This pamphlet was camouflaged as a well-known advertisement of "Electro-Lux, the best vacuum-cleaner."

For the vast majority of subsequent publications, camouflage was selected with no other motive than that of inconspicuousness and harmlessness. The familiar illustrated covers of leaflets advertising the most popular makes of cameras, bicycles, gas-stoves, etc., are only a few of those used for the purposes of the Opposition; but even more convenient were the popular miniature editions already

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bell was one of the first of those murdered "because they knew too much." He was a rather shady individual, and among various sinister accomplishments it was one of his more harmless jobs to procure boys for the "harem" of Storm-troop-Chief Röhm; it so happened that one of these boys was Marinus van der Lubbe, later made to figure as the most opportune tool in the fire conspiracy.

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referred to, of Grimm's Fairy Tales, or the works of Schiller, Gottfried Keller, or even the ancient *Nibelungenlied*. Covers were also used from musical comedy scores, and a complete series of popular "penny-shockers."

Much used too for the purposes of illegal literature were the paper covers of cheap primers on various languages, sports, and games. Some booklets "borrowed" the harmless covers of works on "Which mushrooms are poisonous?" "Don Juan's most thrilling adventure," "Gliding as a sport," "Short biography of Richard Wagner," "Practical recipes for kitchen and house," "Ski-tours in the Black Forest," "Traffic Rules for Everybody," "How to build a radio set," "Fifty amusing parlour games," "How to repair your sewing machine," "Short guide for First Aid," "Twenty recipes for delicious pastry," "Practical hints for chess-players," "Profitable geese-breeding," "How to make field-turnips pay.")

By actually dealing with agricultural problems and giving to farmers chapter and verse regarding Nazi chicaneries, the two last-mentioned booklets certainly reveal a sense of humour in their choice of camouflage, though not so much as two other efforts: one borrowing the cover of a cheap edition of Professor Rudolf Eucken's book on *German Idealism*, and the other that of a pamphlet on *Our Cultural Mission Abroad*, issued by the notorious, Bradford-born Herr Bohle's *Deutsches Auslands-Institut*, a Nazi organization which almost officially made it its business to maintain spy-centres throughout the world. These two book-covers on idealism and culture conceal detailed accounts of how, in the Spanish war, Nazi planes and ships rained bombs and shells on the women and children of defenceless Guernica and Almeria.

A booklet early in July 1933 "borrowed" the cover of a Nazi brochure *Luftschutz tut Not* (A.R.P. is essential).

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That cover contains a facsimile reproduction of the *Völkischer Beobachter* front-page of June 24th with the famous headline "Foreign Airplanes dropping Marxist leaflets over Berlin." The reader will recall the account in earlier pages of that incident. Under this camouflage, the booklet tells the real story how those leaflets were carefully "planted," during the night, on the roof of the big Karstadt department store, it having been calculated that they would be swept into the streets by the draught of the first plane leaving the nearby Tempelhof Airport on its regular course low over the tall roof of the store. This is exactly what happened, and the Gestapo actually arrested the poor Lufthansa pilot who by the whirl of his propellers had unwittingly caused such dangerous reading matter to float down to the much-intrigued Berliners. Fortunately, the pilot established his innocence and was released after a few hours.

Special booklets on the Reichstag fire were brought out even before the end of the Leipzig trial, as well as a pamphlet *Hands off Czechoslovakia* (for once without camouflage) which appeared early in June 1938 and gave a precise account of how Hitler's first *tour de force* in the Sudetenland was frustrated on May 21st by timely Czech mobilization—an account which, needless to say, was news to all those Germans who depended exclusively on the Nazi Press for their information. ✓

Highly up-to-date was one other pamphlet which (brilliantly camouflaged as a pocket time-table) appeared in October 1933 and, under the title *Down with the Plebiscite Fraud*, commented on Hitler's first spectacular "plebiscite," after he had quitted the League. Yet, after some thoroughly pertinent remarks on that subject, the author of the pamphlet ventures this unwise prophecy:

In the six months of its existence the Hitler regime has already proved to be incapable of ridding Germany of the Versailles

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yoke; nor will the regime ever be in a position to effect the *Anschluss* of Austria and to solve such problems as the Polish Corridor or the Saar. . . .

Yet, we might well grant absolution to so poor a prophet on the ground that he could not possibly foresee the extent to which Hitler, in his subsequent coups, would be helped by the leniency, credulity and home-politics of the powers he had to contend with, and the author of that pamphlet is certainly right in continuing that pre-Hitler Germany was well on her way to a peaceful end to Versailles and its results, and that anyway the German people had never suffered so much under the Versailles Treaty as it was now suffering under Hitler, quite apart from his steadily increasing menace to the peace of Europe.

Considering that the examples described are an infinitesimal part of the whole range of anti-Nazi literature secretly circulating in the Reich, the reader might well ask why efforts of such considerable extent and intensity did not lead earlier to a situation ripe for ousting the regime.

The answer is that it takes a great many bricks to build a house. Every one of those booklets, leaflets, pamphlets, produced, distributed and read in the face of appalling difficulties and at constant risk of life, is a small brick towards the building of a free and peaceful Germany in which there shall be no room for Hitler or his like.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Opposition from the Confessional Church

If this were a book on the German underground opposition only, there would be no space in it for the epic struggle of the Church to preserve the purity of its doctrine against the totalitarian aspirations of Nazism. For that struggle is anything but underground; it was, from the first, very much above ground; indeed, all its significance, all its effectiveness, and its very existence depended on its being distinctly outspoken and clearly visible.

On the other hand, Church opposition against Hitlerism never meant to be (and, indeed, emphatically protests against being mistaken as) political propaganda, though this is exactly what the Nazis allege and use as a pretext for its persecution.

In point of fact, Church opposition began as self-defence. Politics were introduced by Nazi aggression, and simply by resisting it the Church unwittingly, and often unwillingly, became one of the most important political factors in the German struggle against the Third Reich.

This is not the first time, nor indeed the last, that in this book we come across that strange phenomenon of forces, thoroughly unpolitic in themselves, driven to become political factors of decisive importance. The explanation is simple; it must be sought in the power those unpolitic forces have to contend with, in that strange conception of

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"totalitarianism" that strives (and, having once started, must continue to strive) to subordinate everything to the State—a strange conception, which naturally carries the germ of its own destruction in the very dynamics of its unappeasable restlessness. That is why the Nazi State, from its first day, had to go from provocation to provocation, had to meet any resistance with persecution and further provocation which, in turn, would stiffen and embitter resistance; and so on and on, a maelstrom which none could escape when once caught in it.

No one in the Third Reich was allowed to stand aloof; no one, try as he would, could seek peace and dignity away from the arena: no private individual, no body of men and certainly not an organism as important and powerful as the Church. They all had to go either with the State or against it. There was no neutrality, and no compromise either.

When the exponents of the Church maintain emphatically that their struggle against the Third Reich is not and never has been political, there can be no doubt as to the sincerity of their statement; they themselves never sought the political arena. But, having been dragged into it and having stood their ground, they could not avoid becoming an active force of political opposition.

Remember how, in dealing with the Opposition's support from abroad, we could not draw a line between mainly cultural and directly political activities. For instance, if anyone should state that exiles like Thomas Mann, Albert Einstein and Paul Hindemith are better exponents of Germany than Adolf Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg and Julius Streicher, then he performs a political action. Similarly (or, indeed, much more so) any Protestant pastor and Catholic priest performs a political action whenever he braves ruthless persecution to defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ

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against the Nazi doctrines of "blood and soil" and the  
"Fuhrer principle."

Stripped of all the various currents and cross-currents  
of an extremely complex situation, the entire struggle of the  
Church against the Third Reich can be reduced to this  
one sentence: when the doctrine "Love thy neighbour as  
thyself" had to face the doctrine "Right is what profits  
the Reich," a clash, sooner or later, was inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

The clash came soon enough.

It came as rather a surprise to most pastors and priests.  
Many of them had actually welcomed National Socialism,  
captivated by all its fine promises of national resurrection,  
idealism, honour and peace and plenty; nor did they think  
the Church had anything to fear from Nazism. Did the  
Party Programme not expressly recognize a basis of "posi-  
tive Christianity"; had not Hitler himself, in his first speech  
in power, stated that the rights of the Churches were not  
to be touched?

There was still a long way to go to that day in February  
1937 when the Nazi Minister for Church Affairs (Kerrl)  
would make this lapidary statement:

The primacy of the State over the Church must be recognized.  
The primary assumptions of our State expressed in Race, Blood  
and Soil, must be inviolable for the Church too. . . . Neighbour  
means blood-brother . . . the question of the divinity of Christ  
is ridiculous and inessential. . . . A new authority has arisen as  
to what Christ and Christianity really are—Adolf Hitler.

By that time, of course, the struggle was already some

<sup>1</sup> While, to a very considerable extent, the Church struggle against  
the Third Reich is concerned with the defence of ideals, it must be borne  
in mind that there were also important material interests at stake, and that  
the Church had to defend its powerful position within the State; yet even  
there materialistic and idealistic aspects are intertwined, when it comes to  
the all-important struggle over the Church's influence in the schools—  
a struggle, as it were, over the soul of the young generation.



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years old; but in earlier days many Churchmen still believed they could come to terms with the Nazis; there could be negotiations, arguments, a reasonable compromise, maybe.

In this they were mistaken. The mistake was exactly that of the political Opposition which had set such high hopes on Reichstag debates which were never to take place; their mistake was exactly that of so many foreign statesmen who took years to realize that the Wilhelmstrasse under the swastika was an entirely different proposition from what it used to be.

As to the Protestant pastors, it did not take them long to realize their mistake. The Third Reich was hardly a few weeks old when the "German Christians" began to come to the fore, a small minority of (mostly very young) Churchmen who had been adherents of Nazism even before its rise to power and who soon gained inordinate importance, thanks to the terrific backing they received from the State.

What is this *Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen*? What is the creed, what are the aspirations of this "Faith movement of German Christians?" Here is a definition from one of their own prominent exponents:

We believe in the future of Germany. It is not a thing which can exactly be proved, it is something irrational, it is a matter of faith; that is why we call it a "Faith movement"; but we are Christians too, and our Christian faith is in no way touched by the other.

Surely a somewhat misty definition, just as vague as so many other pronouncements in Nazi phraseology, including that very item in the Party programme professing "positive Christianity" (which, if it means anything at all, seems to imply that whoever fails to be in full agreement with every Party doctrine must be a "negative" Christian).

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I must not presume to speak with authority on Christian dogma; but I am certain that any true Christian would consider "heresy" a mild way to describe what, in the year two of the Third Reich, the newly-appointed Bishop of Brunswick (aged twenty-nine) said at the graveside of two departed Storm-troopers:

As National Socialists and German Christians we know that there is a Valhalla for the dead of the Third Reich. . . .

This same young man, a few weeks after his appointment to the bishopric, had to stand trial for forgery and embezzlement, and it seems rather typical of Nazi jurisdiction that while he himself was acquitted (on the grounds of insufficient evidence) his assistant was condemned for "complicity in fraud."<sup>1</sup>

Such men were not rare among those German Christians or "Storm-troopers of Christianity" to give them just one of their more colourful self-descriptions.

What did they want? Or, rather, what did Hitler want in backing them? They wanted a "German Reich Church," 100 per cent in line with Nazi doctrines, and they promptly set about getting one; if they failed, it certainly was not from lack of trying nor from over-scrupulous choice of methods; they were, indeed, exactly the same methods as in all other Nazi "conquests."

It all began when Hitler charged a personal friend (and old Nazi) with the task of "unifying the Church"—Ludwig Müller, a former Army chaplain—and it was planned that he should become Reich-Bishop with dictatorial powers. But the majority of the Protestant clergy would have none of this; they agreed on an opposition candidate, Pastor von Bodelschwingh, and elected him Reich-Bishop on May 27, 1933.

<sup>1</sup> *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 13, 1934.

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Hitler could not take such a rebuff lying down. A certain Jäger was promptly appointed "State Commissioner for the Prussian Churches," with the special task of "dealing with the prevailing disorder"—"disorder," of course, meaning nothing more than that the perfectly legal election of Reich-Bishop von Bodelschwingh did not happen to please the Nazis. Herr Jäger went about his job in no uncertain manner; he simply put the Church under police supervision. Bodelschwingh was compelled to resign his office, and a number of leading churchmen were summarily dismissed, among them the General Superintendent of Brandenburg, Dr. Otto Dibelius, one of the most highly respected German pastors who, only a few months earlier, had officiated in the Potsdam *Garrison-Kirche*<sup>1</sup> on the solemn occasion of initiating that unholy union Hitler-Hindenburg-Papen, subsequently known as the Third Reich. Having received, with studied discourtesy, no official notification of his dismissal, Dibelius sent a note which is so significant that I cannot but quote from it:

. . . As I learn from reports in the newspapers, you have summarily dismissed me from my office. It is an evangelical principle that one must obey the secular authority, if conscience be not thereby offended. Faithful to this principle, I shall withhold myself from all administrative business which is within the purview of my office until the question of the legality of the measures taken by you is settled. But the kernel of my office is the spiritual leadership of my district. This concerns the functions of bishop and priest. These functions can only be conferred by the Church and withdrawn by the Church, nor even by her arbitrarily, but only because of erroneous doctrine or criminal offence. On this fact rest the independence and authority of the spiritual office. From these private duties I cannot allow myself

<sup>1</sup> Hitler, with Göbbels and some other satellites, ostentatiously avoided the religious part of the ceremony by spending that time at the graveside of Horst Wessel, the pimp (see p. 59), and other fallen henchmen.

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to be dismissed by any State commissary. They remain my duties in the sight of God. I must and shall fulfil them—certainly at this time when true spiritual guidance is needed more than ever in the Church. . . .

All this caused considerable stir; but it was of no avail; new Church elections were called for July 23rd, and this time the Nazis took no chances; they employed exactly the same election technique which would prove so useful in future elections and "plebiscites": a huge propaganda campaign coupled with ruthless banning of even the most modest form of propaganda in the opposite camp, bluff and bluster, open and implied threats, direct and indirect interference, ranging from more or less gentle "pressure" to actual kidnapping of dozens of pastors who, known to be anti-Nazi, were waylaid on polling Sunday and detained just long enough to stop them from voting.

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that the Nazi-backed Party polled two-thirds of the votes; the surprising thing rather is that, with all the dice loaded against them, the Opposition could make a show at all and score more than 30 per cent. Nor must it be assumed that all pastors who did vote for the "State Party" were out-and-out Nazis, let alone "German Christians" of the more hot-head type. The majority of them just wanted a little peace and quiet and unmolested control of their parishes; for things had actually come to such a pass that non-Nazi village pastors were stopped from performing such official duties as confirmations, weddings and baptism, while a "German Christian" from the neighbourhood was brought in at a moment's notice as substitute.

Anyway, as the result of that election, Hitler's friend Müller did become Reich-Bishop after all; but a much more important (and lasting) result was the fact that the Opposition began to realize its own strength and to organize

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itself in the "Pastors' Emergency League" openly declaring that "the Church of Jesus Christ must not become a domain of the world through the denial of all brotherly love, and through the application of violence." That "Emergency League" of two thousand pastors subsequently grew into what is now commonly called the "Confessional Church."

Meanwhile the Nazis were not slow in trying to exploit the election victory which they had engineered; they hoped to get a considerable step nearer their goal of a Nazi "Reich-Church" when they called a meeting of twenty thousand "German Christians" at Berlin's largest assembly hall, the *Sport Palast*.

That meeting, on November 13, 1933, certainly made history, but more as a boomerang on over-exuberant Nazi aspirations. The principal speaker was Dr. Krause, and though he did not go quite so far as other Nazis—who proclaim that Jesus, far from being a Jew of Nazareth, was in reality a pure "Aryan" born in Prussian Pomerania—he did say that the German conception of Jesus Christ was mainly that of a fighter, and after pouring ridicule on most of the Old Testament and much of the New, went on to say that a good German knows no Holy Places outside Germany, certainly not in Palestine, the whole of which can never be as holy as the grave of one Nazi Storm-trooper.)

That speech, its contents as well as its tone, roused nation-wide indignation; many pastors who so far had stood aloof, or actually within the "German Christians" organization, took their courage into both hands and joined the open challenge to Nazidom.

A few months later, in Ulm (April 1934), the Opposition clergy, overcoming the age-old differences of Lutheran and Calvinist, joined in the "Free Synod Movement" which,

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consolidated at Barmen in May, laid down six "evangelic principles," from which we might quote the following:

The heresy is refuted that the State, over and above its special tasks, should and can become the single and total regulator of human life and thus also fulfil the vocation of the Church.

We reject the false doctrine that the Church should assume, in addition to its special functions, a State position, State duties and a State dignity, and thus become itself an organ of the State.

In answer, "Reich-Bishop" Müller, early in August, suddenly summoned the official National Synod in Berlin, and in true Nazi style he issued a decree making the eligibility of representatives dependent on their "unreserved support of the National Socialist State." He then had dictatorial powers vested in himself and introduced an oath for Church officials, pledging them to "absolute obedience to Adolf Hitler and the Reich-Bishop." Moreover, he had a resolution passed retrospectively conferring legitimacy on all his past acts.

The Opposition was not slow to issue a rejoinder, and even though the Nazis banned its dissemination either in print or by radio, it was read from thousands of German pulpits on Sunday, August 12th. Here is an extract:

This so-called National Synod and its decisions and deliberations are all invalid according to the principles of ecclesiastical law. . . . The Reich Church Government despises the simple fundamentals of law and justice. . . . It is devoid of that brotherly love made obligatory by the Holy Scriptures. Thereby it forsakes the fundamentals of the Reformation Churches built upon the Gospel. . . .

Such courageous language could not but rouse the Nazi wrath; many pastors were arrested, others were expelled from their parishes, and when "disciplinary action" went so far as to place under "house-arrest" such high dignitaries

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as Bishop Wurm of Württemberg and Bishop Meiser of Bavaria, popular indignation produced rousing demonstrations in their favour. The war was on.

We have here neither space nor need for even the most superficial account of the history of the German Church struggle. A considerable amount of excellent literature on the subject is available,<sup>1</sup> more will soon appear. All we can and need do is to select a few significant incidents from the enormous mass of data available, and thus to try to gauge the depth of feeling roused by Nazi persecution of the Church, and its value in the general struggle of the German people against Hitlerism.

It is certain that the indomitable resistance of the Church has at times worried the Nazi leaders as much as any other form of direct political opposition. At times, indeed, it had them at their wits' end. It brought about a constant vacillation between the mailed fist and the velvet glove in their treatment of the Oppositional Church, for there are limits to the extent to which the Nazis can afford to irritate world opinion on an issue of such universal concern. They had to proceed warily.

Of such dilemma "Reich-Bishop" Müller was for ever a victim. There can be no doubt, for instance, that he was by no means innocent of that shameful exhibition of heresy and boorishness in the ill-fated *Sport Palast* meeting,<sup>2</sup> and yet, when the storm broke, he hastened to wash his hands of it and condemn the more flagrant violations of Christian doctrine and good manners. He actually sacked the notorious speaker Krause, but not without retracting within a few days most of what he had said before and supporting the no less notorious Pastor Hossenfelder in most trenchant Nazi style. ✓

<sup>1</sup> See the bibliography at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 122. ~

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Reich-Bishop Müller soon gained the contempt of thousands of pastors who quite openly spoke of him as "*Lügen-Müller*" (Lying Müller); yet they wronged him, for it was surely perplexity rather than mendacity that prompted most of his otherwise inexplicable contradictions.

Take, to quote just one of innumerable instances, that case of almost unbelievable "mildness" when (in October 1933) the Reich-Bishop actually declared that henceforth "no priest should be deposed merely because he was not a German Christian," and contrast that comforting announcement<sup>1</sup> with the ruthless brutality of March 1935, when five hundred pastors were thrown into gaol merely because, in defiance of strict prohibition, they had dared to read from their pulpits a declaration against the pagan teaching of the Nazi "Cultural-Leader" Alfred Rosenberg's ludicrous volume *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*.

There have been countless similar revelations of the pastors' unflinching courage; their mere enumeration would fill more than the pages of this book. If we are to select haphazardly a few such incidents precedence should go (if only for its tragic consequences) to the Confessional Pastors' appeal of May 1936, addressed directly to Hitler. Here is a short excerpt:

. . . God's Church will continue to exist, although millions of Evangelical Christians sink under the endeavour to de-Christianize the German people. No promise has been made to the German people that they shall not be harmed by the poison of an anti-Christian spirit; although it may take them a long time to realize that those who took Christ from them have defrauded them of their best inheritance. . . . Our people threaten

<sup>1</sup> More than two thousand five hundred pastors immediately (October 15th) availed themselves of that announcement by addressing a telegram to Hitler professing their non-adherence to the "German Christians."



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to break down the frontiers set up by God; they wish to make themselves the measure of all things. To act thus is to act in the height of human arrogance, and is rebellion against God.

Hitler never had the courtesy to acknowledge the appeal, let alone the courage to answer it; as so often in similar cases, he dodged the issue pending the possibility of ruthless settlement according to his own interests.

But the appeal had some very tragic consequences. It happened that, a few weeks after its issue, a copy got abroad and was published in the foreign Press. At once a number of Church representatives, pastors as well as laymen, were arrested and tried for no less a charge than high treason. One of them, Dr. Weissler, was sent to concentration camp, although he was as innocent of the alleged "crime" as his colleagues; nor was there a shred of evidence against him, for like the others he had been picked more or less at random. He was most brutally maltreated for weeks, and in March 1937 he was literally flogged to death.

To gauge the full extent of Nazi wrath against that particular appeal, it should be added that it went to the very root of things by including a protest against "the raising of Blood, Race and National Honour to the rank of qualities of eternal value"; also by opposing anti-Semitism as being "essentially alien to Christianity and threatening to destroy our people by defying the Christian doctrine to love one's neighbour"; and finally, by stressing the point that "the Evangelical conscience is most heavily burdened by the fact that there are still concentration camps in Germany . . . and that the measures and actions of the Secret State Police (Gestapo) are exempt from any judicial control."

There is one more significant point to be added to this incident: one of the signatories was a humble suburban pastor who, at that time, was fast becoming the uncrowned

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king of the "Oppositional Church," not by any special dignity of title or age, but by sheer strength of character, indomitable courage, tenacious will-power and unshakable faith. This was Martin Niemöller. Most of his leading colleagues in the "Oppositional Church" were like himself ex-service men, and like soldiers they went to the attack whenever the enemy gave them a chance.

A rather noteworthy chance given them by Hitler himself was when, in a particularly blustering speech (January 30, 1938), he had the impertinence to claim that "no one in the Third Reich has been or ever will be persecuted on account of his religious views." The proper answer came within a week in the form of a letter referring to that Hitler speech and addressed to the Nazi Minister for Church Affairs. Here are some excerpts:

. . . this Church has the mission to preach the Gospel in its purity and solely as it is set forth in the Word of God, and to administer the Sacraments as they were instituted. . . . For our Faith's sake we cannot tolerate that, contrary to the will of the congregations, a Church Government shall ordain pastors and call them to the pulpit who in baptism no longer mention the name of the Trinity, who celebrate the Lord's Supper as a festival of blood and soil and who educate our Youth in a totally different faith from that of the Holy Scriptures. . . . This matter is one which we cannot but resist because we are bound by the unmistakable word of God. . . . You must be acquainted with the list of about two thousand cases of Evangelical pastors and Church members who during recent years and right up to the last days have been arrested or otherwise punished.

This letter was signed by Niemöller's deputy, because at that time Niemöller himself had been in gaol for more than a year and a half.

To give the reader an idea of the "German Christian" faith which the Confessional pastors are fighting so

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desperately, the following is an excerpt from a sermon by Nazi Pastor Lüders, delivered November 28, 1938, in *Siemens-Stadt*, Berlin:

Away with the Jew Bible from Church and School! Open your hearts to the German Saviour!<sup>1</sup> We are now marshalled definitely for the aryanization of the Bible. . . . I summon you all to new work in the old Front: one Führer, one creed! Away with Jewish world domination of Priest-ridden Churches!

(Nazi Pastor Chr. Wenzlaff, of the *Friedens-Kirche* in Küstrin, substituted for the usual Bible texts in the confirmation service the words, "He who serves Hitler serves Germany; he who serves Germany serves God.") Pastor Witzig of Neukölln (a Berlin suburb) abandoned every proper form of confirmation service, and spoke in terms of "the apple-red cheeks of the children" and "the blood-heritage of our forefathers." Pastor Paul of the *Advents-Kirche*, Berlin, was heard to preach: "Are you prepared throughout your life to fight against Rome and against Judah, and if so then answer: yes, so help me Gods!" Bearing all this in mind, it is comprehensible that the Oppositional Church, in 1939, read this Easter message from its pulpits:

. . . How many amongst those who call themselves Christians and perhaps wish to be and to remain Christians are being literally hypnotized and overpowered by the reality of the rule of Satan, Sin and Death in their super-human power and their undeniable triumphs. . . .

But the Nazis, with all their pretence that it was the Confessional Church which "meddled" in politics, used the pulpit quite directly to serve their own political ends. When they occupied Memel, they had Pastor Lüders use

<sup>1</sup> By no means the only example of an attempt at deifying Hitler.

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a confirmation sermon (March 22, 1939) to "preach" these remarkable words:

. . . Our political life and our religious life are one. On this day on which Memel has been liberated we cannot speak about things which are in heaven, things which have nothing to do with the earth. We have to talk to-day about things that matter, and even if the world were full of Englishmen,<sup>1</sup> God sides with the German people. . . .)

Now compare this open abuse of the pulpit for Nazi political purposes with what the Nazis said (and did) when, in the course of the Sudeten crisis, Confessional pastors courageously fulfilled their duty of preaching prayers for intercession like the following:

. . . We pray for all those who are exposed to the temptation of exercising cruel revenge and of being overcome by hate. We remember all those whose lands are threatened by war, and lift up our hearts in prayer to God for all of them. . . .

The Nazi reaction to this could not be better presented than by a literal quotation from *Das Schwarze Korps*, official organ of the S.S.

. . . Those Christian traitors to their country, who care so much for the fate of others, do not deem it necessary to pray with one single word for their own people and its Führer. Thus they find themselves in the same accord with foreign Powers as do their Catholic colleagues. . . . Simply unbelievable that they should dare to make such use of a nation's struggle for the freedom of three and a half millions of its brothers, who are exposed to imminent danger of Bolshevist destruction; unbelievable that they should make this the occasion of meddling politically-minded prayers, representing it as a punishment of God. Such prayers have no longer anything to do with religion,

<sup>1</sup> This is an allusion to Luther's famous words *Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär*, (And if the world were full of devils).

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such theology nothing with theology; they are political manifestations of sabotage against the united front of our people in the most serious hour of its fate. . . . Public security imposes on the State the duty of liquidating those criminals, never mind how they should then cry out and whine about persecution.

Persecution there was, more cruel than before; but the Oppositional pastors stood fast and bore this new series of blows (ranging from mere suspension to arrest and corporal punishment) as unflinchingly as ever, and they returned to the attack with a Message from their Synod, read from their pulpits and otherwise circulated; here are extracts:

Once again, many servants of the Church are prevented from carrying on their service. . . . Under threat of imminent war they were faithful to the Church's mandate to do penance on behalf of the entire nation and to pray to God for pardon and protection. For that they have been accused of High Treason. Also, in view of the proceedings against the Jews, those Pastors have earnestly preached the Ten Commandments and for this reason suffered persecution. . . . We solemnly declare: because Christ alone is our salvation, because His command is the highest command, because with God's help we are and will ever remain Christians, for these reasons we must, in Christ's name, adhere to this,—that the Church has to preach penitence and God's mercy to the entire nation. . . . The Church itself is hard pressed. Day after day more and more buildings, possessions and revenues of the Church are taken away or withheld by State measures from such of the congregations or Church officials as stand firm by the Church's confession. Moreover there is a plan in an authoritative quarter which would effectually put into force what has been attempted ever since 1933: a centralized and secular administration to govern the Church; a mock-Synod to control Church doctrine and the Church's teaching. That which can never belong together is to be forced together. . . .

The remark, in this message, on the proceedings against

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the Jews alludes, of course, to the nation-wide pogrom engineered (in November 1938) by the Nazis to the disgust and frequent open resistance of the overwhelming majority of the German people.<sup>1</sup> The Church was, of course, particularly outspoken in its condemnation of these Nazi crimes, and a special prayer was said at the time, significant enough to demand quotation:

. . . Openly and in secret much evil has been done, parents and teachers have been held in contempt, men's lives and livelihood have been damaged and destroyed, wedlock has been broken, property has been robbed and the honour of neighbours assailed. Lord God we confess before Thee these our sins and our nation's sins. Forgive us and spare us from Thy punishment. Amen.

For the "crime" of having said this very prayer, a Nazi Court, on November 28, 1938, issued a warrant for the arrest of Pastor von Jan in Oberlenningen, Württemberg (one of the few Evangelical pastors in an otherwise predominantly Catholic district.) For the three days preceding that indignity, Pastor von Jan had already suffered even worse ordeals: three days before his arrest, a gang of Nazi hooligans, carrying four big placards with the words "Jew-lackey," had dragged him out of a Bible class, smashed up his vicarage, thrown him on to the roof of a shed, man-handled him brutally, and finally locked him in the local gaol. Legal proceedings were later instituted by the Church Council, but not one of the hooligans was even reprimanded.

The "Jew-lackey" posters were also affixed to the Ludwigsburg Deanery, with the Dean's name, Dörrfuss,

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered how the shooting of a German Embassy official in Paris at the hands of a demented Polish Jew-boy was made the pretext for burning all synagogues, murdering hundreds of Jews, and—the main thing—pilfering their property and imposing an official "fine" of one milliard Reichsmarks.

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added, and shortly before the Sunday service two similar posters were paraded before the Deanery. As the church bells were pealing and the Dean passed the Market Place on his way to church, a few dozen Nazi rowdies staged a noisy demonstration of booing and cat-calls. The police said they could do nothing; as to the townspeople they either stayed indoors, disgusted, or went to church, seemingly unconcerned.

Even worse was the treatment of the Pastor of Bockingen, near Heilbronn: at 2.30 a.m. on November 11th twelve Nazis gathered before the Parsonage, fired a few revolver shots and then began to throw at the pastor's windows considerable quantities of stones, broken concrete, etc., which they had brought along. The beds were littered with broken glass, and it was almost a miracle that the pastor and his wife remained unhurt. Three revolver bullets were found in the ceiling of the nursery. The police, when telephoned for protection, answered: "We have no time; we are too busy with the Jews," these being the days of the pogrom.

We have no space even for enumerating a mere fraction of similar cases on which documentary evidence is available, and we can only select a few more for reasons of special political significance.

We have the authority of Professor Lieb of Basle University to vouch for one particular case concerning an Austrian pastor (one of the few in an otherwise almost exclusively Catholic district), at the time of the "plebiscite" staged by Hitler after the forcible "Anschluss" of Austria. That pastor, while approving the first question (concerning the unity of the two peoples), negated the second (concerning the Nazi leaders appointed); moreover he had the courage to explain his reasons on the voting paper, his main reason being the incompatibility of Nazi *Weltanschauung*

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with Christian doctrine. That night, despite the vaunted secrecy of the ballot, the pastor's paper was read aloud in a beer-house, and by midnight a crowd of Nazis, many in uniform and most of them drunk, surged round the pastor's house shouting "Down with the traitor," "Throw the cur out," etc. Then they broke into the bedroom, beat and kicked the pastor in the presence of his wife, and finally dragged him away to prison, where he was beaten again. His blood-sodden clothes were returned to his wife.

Another significant case was turned into a *cause célèbre* by the Nazi paper *Das Schwarze Korps*; it concerns the refusal of a pastor to accept as godfather a Nazi who prided himself in being a disciple of Alfred Rosenberg and his heathenish Germano-megalomaniac theories. It seems strange that such a man should be so insistent on godfather-ship, and while his being the uncle of the child to be christened might have had something to do with it, the primary motive was indubitably spite, and the desire to make trouble with the pastor. Anyway, he renewed his request for godfathership and was again rejected, on the very plausible ground that only a few weeks earlier he had declared his intention of leaving the Church altogether. Whereupon the Nazi wrote the pastor an insulting letter bristling with vile threats and foul language; the *Schwarze Korps* published the letter with glee and appropriate comment; the pastor courageously stood his ground; the Nazi did not act godfather; the pastor was arrested.

Of innumerable individual expressions of such courage one of the nicest is this point from a pastor's letter to a certain Nazi authority:

... I declare that I am solely under the Totalitarian orders of Jesus Christ. No one can serve two masters.



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And one of the finest points is in one of many pastors' letters sent from prison:

. . . We have entered upon this Church struggle as something to be fought with courage, and we know that we are bound before God to carry it through to the end, for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake also of our people. . . .

But the most significant point of all—one which indeed illumines both the nature and the goal of the entire Church struggle—was raised in one of Pastor Niemöller's sermons. This is what he said in his suburban church on June 19, 1937:

. . . from all sides, from Statesmen and from "the man in the street" we are being approached: "For God's sake, don't talk so loud or you might get yourselves in prison. Why say things so clearly? All this might as well be implied, somewhat less directly."—Brothers and sisters, we must not put our light under a bushel, lest we be disobedient; we act under command of Him who is the Light of the World; He does not need us as a wick; He can use other wicks, other humans to give His light to.—"He who would save his life shall lose it; and he who shall lose his life for My sake shall find it,"—this applies to the life of the community as much as to every Christian's life; and in our present position this cannot but mean: I must speak once more to-day, perhaps next Sunday I shall no more be able; I must say it to-day as clearly as I can—for who knows what will have happened by next Sunday! . . .

Prophetic words indeed; for less than two weeks of freedom and only one more Sunday sermon was granted him after this. But before turning to that last of Martin Niemöller's sermons under Hitlerism, here is another passionate accusation made in his pulpit on April 7, 1937:

Things have come to such a pass that our every plea for justice and peace is answered with scorn and with a further

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tightening of our chains. Here, indeed, no friendly appeal can be of any avail, no brotherly love, no Christian solidarity can have any sense at all.

Here are a few extracts from Niemöller's most famous sermon, the last before his arrest:

. . . No more than the apostles do we wish to escape the authorities; but no more are we prepared to be silenced on human command when our Lord commands us to speak. Nothing will ever alter this: one must obey God more than men. This, friends, we think of when looking at the long list of those arrested, and there are not merely four as the newspapers reluctantly admit; there are, if I know of them all, forty-eight of us in gaol this day. . . . I cannot help thinking how last Wednesday the Secret Police forced entry into the Friedrichswerder church and, in sight of the altar, arrested eight members of the Council of Brethren; I think of how yesterday at Saarbrücken, six women and a trusted man of the Evangelical Community were arrested, because they had circulated an election leaflet of the Confessional Church at the direction of the Council of Brethren. I say: he who has suffered through all this cannot be far from the words of the Prophet, "it is enough, nay it is too much, now oh Lord take away my life." . . . Anyone who, like myself last Friday evening, had to suffer beside him at Communion Service three young Gestapo men, whose duty it was to inform upon the Community of Jesus in their praying, in their singing and in their teaching; young men who certainly were once baptized in the name of Jesus, who certainly have pledged their faith to the Saviour and who are now in duty bound to lay traps for His flock; such an one cannot easily save himself from the shame of the Church. "Lord have mercy!"

Three days later, Pastor Niemöller was arrested, and after many months in prison, though acquitted by a Court of Law, he was immediately put into a concentration camp,

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where he still remains, often in solitary confinement and, worse, robbed of books, pencil and paper. The Nazis' last chicanery against him, shortly before the war, was to place him on the "reserve list" which, for Frau Niemöller and their seven children, meant a 33 per cent cut of income and the loss of their manse.

Apart from Niemöller, there were, just before the war, only three other Evangelical churchmen actually in concentration camp, the most notable of them, perhaps, being Pastor Schneider<sup>1</sup> of a little place called Dickenschied. Schneider was arrested in December 1937 for resisting a Nazi expulsion order from his parish. Many eye-witnesses report on his indomitable courage under ill-treatment at Buchenwald Camp. His wife with her six children (and with the active support of the townspeople) stayed on in the parish to maintain the legal claim of her husband as rightful pastor of Dickenschied. She died, aged thirty-eight, in summer 1939, from her maltreatment.

Of the other two in concentration camp one is young Leikam, a Württemberg State-official, aged twenty-three,

<sup>1</sup> He has since succumbed to the brutal treatment meted out to him in many months of solitary confinement. To describe the last his fellow-sufferers ever saw of him, I quote from an eye-witness report of a fellow-prisoner who was later released:

"... his thin, emaciated face pressed against the iron railings gripped by his fleshless hands, as he broke the deadly silence:

*'Do not follow the murderers; for they are scorning God's Command "Thou shalt not kill." They want to destroy you, they are barbarians such as history has never known. God will punish them. For seven months I have been kept in the dark cell, innocent; my only crime is that I am a Christian and believe in God.'*

His voice was getting fainter. Camp-Commandant Rodl rushed furiously to the window to strike at the pastor with his stick. But the window was too high, and the pastor continued with his indictment until he sank back exhausted, disappearing from view.

The roll-call was over. We were hustled on to work. We saw nothing more of Pastor Schneider."

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who was arrested early in 1938 for active Christian work among young people and for circulating leaflets of the Confessional Church; and the other is Pastor Steinbaur, who has been in the Sachsenhausen Camp since March 28, 1939. He had been arrested many times before on account of his fearless warnings against Nazi paganism. The immediate reason for his latest arrest was his refusal to "prove his 'Aryan' descent." He is not yet thirty.

Apart from those in concentration camp, there were, in the summer 1939, as many as one hundred and three Evangelical pastors curtailed by reduction of salary and various other restrictions; thirty-seven others were prohibited from leaving their districts, ten were under house arrest, forty-four were barred from speaking in public, one hundred were expelled from their parishes, four were exiled to certain small country places and an unspecified number were in prison.

I have left to the last one of the most important aspects of the Church struggle against Hitlerism: the reaction of the young, the treatment and behaviour of the students of theology.

To grasp the weight of the decision these young men had to face, one must try to realize the full meaning of the alternatives between which they had to choose: the certainty of quick promotion and easy honours if only they recognized the Nazis, and the security of ample stipends from the very beginning, with generous extra allowances once they had a family; and, as the other alternative, no financial security at all,<sup>1</sup> and the certainty of persecution and constant

<sup>1</sup> The Confessional Church could never afford to pay its pastors (even married men with large families) more than a pittance of RM.150 (about £7 10s.) per month; many of them literally starved, and yet, out of their modest stipend, each of them managed to pay RM.100 (£5) a year into their own Emergency Fund.

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chicanery, the probability of gaol, the possibility of violent death.

And yet only one out of every ten Evangelical candidates yielded to the temptation of the easier way; in 1938 as many as nine hundred and forty-five candidates refused to submit themselves to the Examination Board of the Nazi-backed "German Christians" and flocked instead to the examination which the Confessional Church maintained under the greatest difficulties. Moreover, although no later figures are available, there can be no doubt that the movement of young people towards the Confessional Church has been constantly increasing.

Considering that every one of these young men, apart from following the voice of his own conscience, must have had the moral support of several of his next-of-kin and friends, this must surely rank as added evidence that Hitlerism can have no roots in the hearts of the people, and that the world can rest assured as to the moral fibre of those who will have to help in building the Germany to come.

## The Opposition from the Catholics

*German People, preserve what thou hast got! Do not let them rob thee of the precious heritage of the Holy Scriptures! Do not let them rob our children by banning the Bible from German schools!*  
—Cardinal Faulhaber in a Munich church sermon, Christmas 1933.

Between the struggle of the Confessional Church and that of the Catholic Church against the Nazis there is this fundamental difference: the one is a purely German affair whilst the other has the backing of one of the world's greatest international forces, with headquarters in Rome.

Furthermore, within the framework of the Evangelical Church the Nazis could build a force of their own, the "German Christian Movement"; but they had no such chance, or almost none,<sup>1</sup> within the Catholic Church, closed against them by its powerful international ramifications.

Thus, so far as the Catholic Church is concerned, there

<sup>1</sup> Whatever non-spurious efforts at full "co-ordination" with Nazism there were on the part of individual Catholic priests were negligible; and the one and only chance of building the "away-from-Rome" movement into something as tangible as the "German Christians," some form of "nazified Catholicism" (a contradiction *per se*, of course), the Nazis spoiled by their own intransigence in driving the potential standard-bearer of such a movement back into the fold. I am alluding to the Austrian Cardinal Innitzer.

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cannot even be the pretence of the struggle having been anything but political, though the Catholics have this in common with the Evangelicals, that the struggle certainly was none of their seeking. Indeed, they tried very hard to avoid it, they showed unbelievable patience, restraint and endurance in the face of untold abuse, calumny and down-right persecution; they actually strove for a political alliance with Hitlerism on the common platform of anti-Bolshevism; otherwise, all they wanted was to be left in peace and to be allowed to preach and confess their Faith.

For them the struggle was, more or less, a *kulturkampf*, even though the grimmest they ever had to sustain; as to the Nazis, with their customary tactics of accusing the opponent of what they themselves were doing, they continually accused the Catholic Church of meddling in politics, and that the Church must be punished for this reason only. In point of fact, the boot was on the other foot; it was the Nazis who for ever meddled in the affairs of the Church, trying to bring it "into line" with their own totalitarianism, an utter impossibility of course, so long as both parties stuck to their fundamental principles.

Nothing could more clearly illustrate the Nazi attitude to Catholicism than the following two quotations, the first of which is from a Nazi leader's address to the Rhineland *Führer-Schule* (where picked members of the "Hitler-Youth" are trained for the higher posts in the hierarchy):

National Socialism is essentially anti-Christian. We need not predict a *kulturkampf*; it is in full swing. The Catholics are so stupid that they are not even aware of it. The Concordat was expressly designed to send them to sleep. If I knew that there was a clericalist among you, he would be instantly expelled. Take care that in the Saturday programmes arranged by the State for youth, the young people are sufficiently tired to be unable to go to Mass. ~

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While that quotation comes from the first year of the regime, the next is from a speech which Alfred Rosenberg<sup>1</sup> addressed to a meeting of selected Nazi leaders in 1938:

. . . There are firebrands among us who wish to hurry the Führer into simply exterminating the Catholic Church and the Confessionals, in the same way as we have dealt with the Bolshevist Parties. We must constantly realize that the international position of the Catholic Church imposes on us very cautious tactics. Every attack against the Church involves its international position and is bound to make our own position even more difficult than it is. I fully realize that the Catholic Church, as well as the Confessional one in its present shape, have to disappear from the life of our nation. But when various groups representing German philosophy think fit to play about with ferocious radicalism I must tell them that they are merely making martyrs of our foes and incidentally harm the prestige of the Reich. We have already gone a long way in permeating German youth with Nazi philosophy. Whatever groups of the Catholic Youth Movement are still gadding about, they are nothing but fragments which will be absorbed in due time. The Hitler Youth is like an absorbing sponge which nothing can withstand. Furthermore in every kind of school the development of the school curriculum in the anti-Christian sense has already been worked out, so that the growing generation may be safe from the Black swindle. In due time we shall wipe out the last defences of the Church which, I confess, are very strong. . . . We have still another means of coercion: the purse-strings. Here we have to proceed cautiously, but all the more systematically, so as to cut the financial veins of those clergy whom we cannot win over. . . .

It is difficult to fix a starting-point for the struggle between the Catholic Church and Hitlerism; as a political

<sup>1</sup> Prolific author of germano-megalomaniac tomes like *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*. Hitler considers him the world's greatest philosopher and appointed him "Spiritual Leader of the German people."



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struggle it might be said to have started even before the Nazis rose to power. For obviously, with a very important political party of their own, the Catholics opposed the Nazis at the polls, including that last "semi-fake" election of March 5, 1933.<sup>1</sup> In fact, only three years earlier, Catholics had been expressly forbidden to join the Nazi Party, on pain of exclusion from the Sacraments. Nor did the Centre Party (in common with others) give up hopes of survival during the first few weeks after Hitler's appointment to the Chancellery; as a matter of fact, as late as May 6th, when the erstwhile leader of the Centre Party resigned, ex-Chancellor Brüning took charge, still hoping to keep the party together. A very slender hope indeed, considering that this was more than two months after the Reichstag fire, at a time when, day by day, the Nazis were taking a firmer and ever more ruthless grip of power.

So weak, indeed, had the fading Centre Party become that it did not even require forcible suppression; a gentle "suggestion" of "voluntary dissolution" sufficed, and on July 5th this was carried into effect. Brüning went into exile. The previous day, the South-German Catholic Party, the "Bavarian People's Party," had met a similar end, and three days later the Concordat was initialled in Rome.

There certainly was some inner connexion both in these dates and in the relative meekness and gentleness<sup>2</sup> shown by the opposed parties towards each other: they both desired the Concordat then under negotiation. The Catholics set high hopes upon it as a means of regulating and stabilizing their position in respect of their new rulers, and the Nazis

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 40 *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Very* relative gentleness on the part of the Nazis; for even though, in those pre-Concordat weeks, they did "soft-pedal" anti-Catholic propaganda, there still were such incidents as the use by Hermann Goring (then already of Cabinet rank) of the term "black moles" when alluding to the Catholic clergy in a public speech.

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set great store by it because it was to be something like their first success in foreign politics; something like admitting a professional rowdy to a drawing-room and helping to forget the bad impression created by concentration camps, Jew-boycotts and other more boisterous efforts which had not gone down too well in the civilized world.

The Concordat was duly signed on July 20th by Cardinal Pacelli (the present Pope) and Franz von Papen in whose chequered career this must indubitably be the greatest personal success: yet it seems an insult even to Papen's intelligence to imagine him other than with his tongue in his cheek during his repeated protestations, then and later, as to the certainty of cordial relations between Catholicism and National Socialism. For von Papen was not merely a Catholic, he also happened to know Hitler and the Nazis, having acted as midwife at the birth of the Third Reich.<sup>1</sup>

The Concordat was duly ratified a few months later; but it had been repeatedly broken long before that. It is indeed unlikely that any Nazi Treaty has ever been so consistently broken.

The first serious trouble arose exactly five days after the signature when the Nazis promulgated their famous "Sterilization Bill" which, having been decided on long before, had been wisely held back till the Concordat was safely in the bag. Here indeed is the classical example of the unbridgeable gulf between Catholicism and Nazism. While a law providing for the sterilization of those physically deformed is obviously in opposition to fundamental principles of the Church, that law is just as obviously fully in keeping with the "racial" theories professed by the leaders of the Third Reich as fundamental to Nazi ideology, even though they did not go to the length of castrating club-footed Dr. Joseph Göbbels and certain other Nazi

<sup>1</sup> See p. 33.

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leaders who, strictly speaking, should have come within the reach of that very law which they had helped to draft and promulgate.

The utterly futile controversy went on for years until, in a rather significant official statement on the "philosophical basis of the National Socialist Programme," the Party issued this "final" declaration:

. . . The Church recognizes that certain physical characteristics can be inherited, but denies this of spiritual aptitudes and capacities. We recognize no such duality of body and soul. Here we clearly understand the Church's opposition to the first purely National Socialist Law, the Sterilization Law. The two philosophies are fundamentally different in their conception of life's meaning. The Church speaks of the sinful body that must be overcome. . . . We, on the contrary, believe that we are under commission from the Most High when we see our first fulfilment upon the earth, in the world in which destiny sets us. If there is a Heaven the way to this Heaven is only by Germany. Whoever sets any service above the service of the people is guilty of idolatry. . . .

Moreover, in an official Nazi comment on this the moral is pointed that "the triumph of one of these philosophies means the death of the other."

But the first immediate friction over the Concordat arose within a day of its signature, when Herr von Papen, flushed with his triumph and irrepressible in his traditional blundering through wishful thinking, flew home with the announcement that, from now on, the Pope was prepared to support the National Socialist Movement and "the young Hitlerian Reich." Within a few days the *Osservatore Romano* countered that the Concordat was based on canon law and in no way implied approval of the National Socialist form of government or recognition of certain Nazi doctrines and political theories.

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Friction continued all through the rest of that first year of the Third Reich, nor was it alleviated, about Christmas time, by a pastoral letter of the Austrian bishops denouncing the Sterilization Law, anti-Semitism and extreme Nationalism.

Soon afterwards, in a manner which could not but be considered a deliberate insult to Catholicism, Hitler appointed Alfred Rosenberg of all people to the specially created post of "Reich-leader for *Weltanschauung*."<sup>1</sup> Nor was the Church slow in striking back: Rosenberg's appointment was dated January 24, 1934, and on February 9th the Vatican issued a decree (published in the *Osservatore Romano* on the 14th) placing Rosenberg's notorious *Myth of the Twentieth Century* on the index of forbidden books. To appreciate the full impact of this, one should bear in mind that Rosenberg's tome ranks a good second to *Mein Kampf* in the shrine of the Nazis' "sacred" books.

A week or two later Cardinal Schulte of Cologne followed with this courageous address to his arch-diocese:

It is heathenism and apostasy from Christ and Christianity to see the essential element in religion only in the requirements of alleged Blood and Race. . . . It is heathenism and apostasy from Christ and Christianity that a man should declare to-day that "Blood and Honour" should alone determine the meaning of our earthly life; that for the sacred means of grace, which our divine Redeemer instituted for our salvation and vouchsafes to us through His Church, there could be substituted the maintenance of a particular kind of human blood in its purity, I mean, by the so-called mystery of Nordic blood.

There can be no doubt that, in the first few months of that year 1934, the Church was in a good attacking mood (if that word be permissible to describe what, after all, was

<sup>1</sup> An untranslatable word which might be rendered by "general outlook" or "philosophy of life."

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a thoroughly defensive effort to preserve a modicum of legitimate rights).

Anyway, at that year's Bishops' Congress at Fulda, early in June, it was decided to issue a pastoral letter which was to contain passages like these:

. . . whereas neo-paganism makes obtrusive propaganda for itself, our Catholic Press is no longer accorded the right openly to discuss important questions of the day in the light of Catholic faith and morals, or to ward off the attacks that are made on Christianity and the Church. . . . Our Catholic organizations and societies are prevented by restrictive regulations from fulfilling their functions in the service of Church and fatherland. . . . We, as responsible shepherds of the flock, may not hold our peace when we see that influential bodies pay no regard to the instructions and assurances of the Reich Government and are desirous of suppressing and destroying the Christian faith and Christian life in our people. . . .

But this pastoral letter never reached its German audience; for it so happened that, a few days before it was to be read from the pulpits, Hitler asked to see a number of Bishops in urgent conference so as to settle amicably all outstanding problems and points of conflict; the reading of the sharp pastoral letter was accordingly postponed pending that conference. Hitler was more amiable and conciliatory than the bishops had ever dreamed of; as to all that neo-pagan business—said the Führer—he'd soon put a stop to it, and as to the principal present point of conflict, the interpretation of Article 31 of the Concordat,<sup>1</sup> this would also have to be settled presently.

<sup>1</sup> That much disputed article provided for Catholic organizations and associations of a purely religious or charitable as well as of a mere cultural or social character. Exact determination, under the terms of the Concordat, was to be agreed on at some later date. It never was. But before long things came to such a pass that even Catholic Chess Clubs and Table Tennis meetings were banned.

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This amiable conference took place on June 26, 1934, and the date should be well marked: it was barely four days before the "night-of-the-long-knives," the famous "blood-purge" of June 30th, when ex-Chancellor v. Schleicher and his young wife, S.A. Chief Ernst Röhm and more than a thousand others were murdered, including a number of prominent Catholics such as Dr. Erich Klausener, head of the Catholic Action in Berlin, Dr. Beck, his opposite number in Munich, Dr. E. Jung, Herr von Bose and Herr von der Decken, all of them collaborators of v. Papen, Dr. Mühlert, a Munich priest, Baron von Guttenberg, and several others.

At the time of that amiable meeting the bishops, of course, could not know the grim events that were to follow. But Hitler did know, and this indeed was the reason for his amiability; he knew that he would have to face a great deal of animosity on account of the murders, and he could not afford more at the moment.

Indeed he has mostly been very shrewd in judging to a nicety the exact limits to which he could go so as to keep the cauldron boiling without boiling over; he has had an incomparable gift for keeping his various "hates" on tap, as it were, turning them on and off just as they suited his needs.

Precisely thus did he turn off the heat of the Catholic cauldron when he was contemplating the "blood purge," just as he had done the year before when he sought the Concordat, and just as he would do the next year when he was facing the Saar plebiscite and could not afford to antagonize Catholic opinion in that almost exclusively Catholic territory. But as soon as he had the Saar plebiscite safely in the bag he started another big anti-Catholic "drive," which had of course been contemplated, organized and "kept on tap" for a long time.

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It was on March 1, 1935, that the Saar plebiscite was decided in Germany's favour,<sup>1</sup> and on March 9th Göbbels began his violent and elaborate propaganda campaign, accusing the Catholic Church of currency-smuggling.

This requires some explanation: since the German bank crash of 1931 certain restrictions had had to be introduced with regard to the export of foreign currency; when the Nazis came to power these restrictions were considerably tightened and entangled, and the situation became so extraordinarily complicated that it was a truism rather than a joke to say that Dr. Schacht was the only man in Germany who really and completely knew his way through the maze of currency regulations. New decrees on currency regulation would be issued at the rate of one or two a week. It is to be doubted if there is a German alive (among those with business contacts abroad) who has not, unwittingly or deliberately, violated one of these currency regulations at some time, though perhaps none have ever violated them so flagrantly as the Nazi leaders themselves, with millions of golden "nest-eggs" smuggled abroad.

As to the accused Catholic Convents, Orders, etc., all they had done, in most cases, was to transfer amounts they owed to sister Convents, etc., abroad, by crediting corresponding foreign holdings to their favour instead of importing them and delivering them to the Reichsbank in exchange for Reichsmarks—which, of course, would have made it impossible for them to pay their foreign debts at all.

Doubtless most of the accused priests and sisters were technically guilty of a breach of the law, though there can be no doubt either that many of them, inexperienced in

<sup>1</sup> Most Catholic voters in the Saar made it quite clear that they were voting for Germany rather than the Nazis; one bishop expressly called it "an advance of confidence made to the Nazi Leader of the Reich"—an advance which certainly, soon enough, had to be written off as a bad debt.

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business let alone the complications of German currency law, were not even aware of doing anything wrong. One thing is quite certain: not one of the accused had employed one penny of the amounts in question to personal profit or advantage.

With that much legal ground, Göbbels made the whole case into a series of "sensational monster frauds," described in a style which one might have expected in one of the less scrupulous penny shockers, rather than in official Government statements. For months on end the Nazi Press ran flaring headlines: "Criminals in surplices," "Latest revelations of gigantic Clergy fraud," etc. As to the penalties imposed on some of the accused, they were as high as ten years' hard labour. To this were added subtle indignities, as in the case of one accused Sister who, having worn lay clothes throughout the trial, was forced to put on her Convent robes when receiving sentence.

But the worst of the whole business was the deliberate effort to distort a few petty irregularities of minor officials into what was to be the moral death-blow to the entire Catholic Church in Germany, and the most sickening thing about it was the unbelievable hypocrisy of Nazi righteousness, as revealed when, unwittingly, the *Völkischer Beobachter* made this confession:

... The undeniable approval of the crime by the hierarchical superiors of the accused entitles us to talk of a system which is irreconcilable with the spirit of a national education of our youth.

This reveals the real Nazi aim in taking so much trouble. A chance to discredit the Church would certainly be welcome at all times; but this time they had the much more immediate object of settling the very burning and important problem of the Catholic Confessional schools, by closing



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them once and for all and by securing a firm grip on Catholic Youth so as to submit it exclusively to Nazi ideology.

This is what the Nazis really sought, and since they could not say so openly, since, in fact, this would have been a flagrant breach of the Concordat, they had to go about it in another way. Thus the currency laws were invoked to provide a "moral" cloak for a very practical end.

This is an almost classical example of the Nazi tactics that are employed again and again, both in internal and foreign politics: when they were professing to help Spanish patriots against a "Bolshevist and Anarchist rabble," and all they really wanted was Spanish iron ore and mercury and certain strategic advantages; when they were professing to come to the rescue of down-trodden brethren crying out for the liberation of Sudetenland, and all they really wanted were important industrial assets like the Skoda Works, and even more important strategic positions. Just so did they profess moral indignation over currency frauds, when all they really wanted was to nazify the Catholic Youth.

They had one other objective: money. They were jealous of the fact that the Church's collection plates were always fuller than their own innumerable collection boxes for "Strength through Joy" and other Nazi organizations, from which boxes a fair proportion used to find its way into the pockets of major and minor Nazi bosses. So the "Currency Scandals" were widely used for propaganda. Slogans such as "Not a penny for the currency smugglers," "Don't send your money to Rome; give it to the Winter Relief," etc., are obvious examples, and such posters were frequently flaunted by uniformed Nazis before the churches on Sunday mornings. There is one case on record of a Munich congregation, angered by such tactlessness, putting double the usual amount into the collection plate; but there

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are also cases recorded of Catholic collections actually confiscated by the Gestapo and appropriated for the Party on the ground of "having been collected by enemies of the State."

When the "currency scandals" failed to cut as much ice as the Nazis had hoped, the redoubtable Göbbels thought of an even more fiendish scheme to discredit the Catholic Church and garner its schools for the Nazi creed. There followed, over a period of many months, a terrific broadside of Nazi propaganda: the so-called "Immorality Trials."

Let us examine whatever factual basis there was. Most of it is centred at a little place called Waldbreitbach, where some Franciscan Brothers ran a small community to look after mentally deficient children. They were not even regular members of the Franciscan Order, nor were they priests at all; they were lay-brothers. It so happened that some helpers they had accepted years before had been guilty of sexual aberrations. Even so, the majority of these cases—many of them in the remote past—collapsed for lack of evidence, and what remained was mostly based on the evidence of mentally deficient children.

Every lawyer, of course, knows how to value the evidence of children in sex-trials, let alone that of mentally deficient children. Yet, on such flimsy ground Göbbels built his attempt to make the entire Catholic Church appear as a den of foulest moral depravity.

There was one other case of a young man found guilty of incest; his one and only connection with the Catholic Church was the fact that a year or two before the crime he had started but not continued a course in theology; and yet the case was persistently front-paged with such flaring headlines as "Catholic Priest commits incest," "Sex-fiend in surplice," etc. For months on end, almost day by day,

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every Nazi paper<sup>1</sup> appeared like a pornographic rag, and there exists one issue of the *Völkischer Beobachter* front-paging in enormous letters some particularly filthy details of indescribable orgies concerning one Brother Agricola, and containing on an inside page, in smallest print, the laconic announcement that "in view of the contradictory evidence the accused Brother Agricola had to be acquitted." But this did not prevent the paper from continuing to call every Catholic church a haven of vice and every convent a brothel.

Obviously, a propaganda campaign of such gigantic extent cannot have failed to impress a great many of those easily captivated by so appealing a medium as pornography (which, after all, was the one and only attraction of Streicher's notorious *Stürmer* too). Yet, Göbbels must have been sorely disappointed by the reaction of many millions of Germans who, in spite of everything, had retained the faculty of thinking for themselves; as far as they were concerned, that filthy propaganda had the opposite effect, damaging its perpetrators rather than its victims, and a great many of them, and by no means only Catholics, gave vent to their indignation in the most courageous manner.

Now came another very typical Nazi move: quite as suddenly as it had been started, overnight as it were, the "immorality" campaign was stopped. Not another word about it in either Press or Radio. The whole thing, in the approved and well-tried manner, was "put on ice," to be used again on some future occasion.

And the reason for this sudden stop? It happened to be August 1936, and all Göbbel's propaganda-broadsides were

<sup>1</sup> Since all papers were forced to print the outpourings of Göbbels' "Ministry for Propaganda and Enlightenment," this means *every* paper in Germany.

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required to boost the Berlin Olympiad and to present the Third Reich as an idyll of peace, plenty and contentment, and of jolly sportsmanship under the benevolent eyes of its Nazi Fairy Kings. In such circumstances, and with so many foreign visitors in town, it would never do to flaunt such unpleasant front-pages. Even the almighty Streicher had to suffer the temporary removal of his "window-boxes," which at so many street corners would attract the children to gape at the alluring pornographic pictures in the *Stürmer*. But they all came back when the Olympic Games were over, and so did the anti-Catholic propaganda whenever it was required.

As to the main point at issue, the religious schools, the Nazis won hands down; but they owed their success not so much to Göbbel's two big campaigns as to the strict employment of typical Nazi "election" methods, well-tried in numerous other fake-elections and "plebiscites."

To appreciate the magnitude of the issue at stake it should be realized that in pre-Nazi Germany, the aggregate of 52,959 schools included as many as 15,256 that were Catholic.<sup>1</sup> Referenda on these religious schools were organized from time to time, and in 1933 as many as 89 per cent of the parents still voted in favour of them, a figure which may well be taken as a genuine expression of opinion, considering that at that time the Nazis had not yet been in power long enough to perfect the machinery for forcing any coveted issue. Even in 1935 as many as 66 per cent of Catholic parents still voted in favour of their schools; but by 1936 the figure was down to 35 per cent, and next year to 4 per cent.

To understand this apparent landslide and appreciate its

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-nine thousand and twenty were Evangelical, ninety-seven Jewish, and only eight thousand two hundred and ninety-one undenominational.

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utter insignificance as a true barometer of opinion, one must bear in mind the enormous pressure of threats and intimidation exercised by the Nazis, to say nothing of downright trickery employed whenever necessary.

Of innumerable such cases on record I will quote only one of a certain town where the parents were summoned to a meeting with a notice providing that "whoever fails to attend will be deemed to consent to the meeting's decisions." It so happened that of sixty-five parents entitled to vote, twenty-nine stayed away. Of those who attended, eleven left the meeting in protest when, after a lecture on why a Nazi school was preferable to a religious one, not even a debate was allowed. Of the remaining twenty-five parents, sixteen voted for the Nazi school and nine against it. When the "result of the voting" was published next day it appeared as a 56:9 "victory" for the Nazis, manufactured simply by using the votes of the absentees and those who had left under protest, a quite usual Nazi election practice which, in one of the many recorded cases with a particularly large number of absentees, procured a Nazi majority of 92.7 per cent.

Most of those who absented themselves, did so, of course, not for reasons of indifference but because of sheer intimidation. As to the methods employed for this, nothing could be more typical than this extract from a letter addressed to a Catholic by the Nazi Mayor of his town:

. . . the Youth Department of the town intends to see that your child is entered at the communal school. As you are aware, according to the National Socialist conception of law, parents are not considered, as they formerly were, to be autonomous and sovereign moral personalities, independent of the State. They are simply trustees for the people. I take it for granted, therefore, that you will be in full agreement with the Youth Department of the town.

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A somewhat sharper note was struck by one party official who, in a public speech, declared that people who keep their children away from the State schools and Youth organizations "commit a crime against the German people and its future and do not deserve the name of father and mother"; the speaker concluded with this priceless remark:

In centuries to come, people looking back on the present events will say: Christ was great, but Adolf Hitler was greater.

It must not be supposed that all this was accepted without protest; indignation and suppressed fury smouldered and quite often flared into open resistance, such as in the famous Oldenburg "crucifix revolt," to quote only one instance.

In Oldenburg (and in many other Catholic districts) the population had been particularly incensed by the forcible removal of the crucifix from schools. Finally things came to such a pass that the Party ordered the local district-leader (*Gauleiter* Röver) to call a mass-meeting amply reinforced by Storm-troops and staunch Party-adherents. Yet the four thousand Catholics who thronged the hall were, for once, in a majority, and when Herr Röver started one of the customary harangues on the glorious Führer and Reich, the four thousand Catholics, undaunted by the Storm-troops' rubber truncheons, interrupted the speech continuously by chanting in unison "The Crucifix! The Crucifix! Stick to the point! The Crucifix." Finally the district leader, very much flustered, could not but promise that the decree would be rescinded and the crucifixes brought back.

A little later came what must be considered by far the most important individual act of Catholic resistance against Hitlerism: the famous Papal Encyclical of Palm Sunday 1937. This is easily the most passionate and outspoken appeal ever launched from so exalted a sphere; its political

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significance cannot be overrated, and it might well be called the final challenge of Catholicism to Nazism. Here are a few quotations:

. . . The experience of the past years fixes the responsibility. It discloses intrigues which from the beginning had no other aim than a war of extermination. . . .

On the subject of the "school-struggle" (incidentally a flagrant Nazi violation of the Concordat) the Pope did not mince words:

The Church . . . cannot do otherwise than declare that the enrolments of pupils which have just taken place in circumstances of notorious coercion are the effects of violence and void of all legality. . . . We know that a free and secret ballot would mean an overwhelming majority in favour of the confessional school.

Or take these trenchant words on the general subject of Nazi ideology:

Only superficial minds can fall into the error of speaking of a national God, of a national religion, and of making a mad attempt to imprison within the frontiers of a single people, within the pedigree of one single race, God, the Creator of the world. . . . He who sacrilegiously misunderstands the abyss between the God-Man and the children of men, and dares to place beside Christ, or worse still—above Him and against Him, any mortal, must endure to be told that he is a false prophet. . . .

This encyclical, read from thousands of pulpits, caused a tremendous stir all over the country, and while putting much heart into the resistance of clergy and congregations alike, it also angered the Nazis and led them to increase their persecutions. Wherever the Gestapo found that the text of the encyclical was being passed around they swooped, and made indiscriminate arrests. ✓

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Even worse than this was a new wave of trials begun after the relative failure of the currency and immorality trials. These were the "treason trials," staged with nationwide publicity on such flimsy pretexts as letters written abroad in complaint of the persecutions within the Reich.

One Franciscan lay brother, Ludwig Pfannmüller, had been "guilty" of nothing but writing to a friend in the U.S.A. about the spiritual and economic distress of everyone, about the general persecutions, the lack of money and the bad quality of substitute clothing, etc. The letter was seized by the Gestapo, the man was tried for High Treason and sentenced to gaol.

Punishment even more cruel was meted out to Father Rossaint, a very popular priest in the Ruhr district, who had been guilty of the terrible crime of having once played a part in the "Peace League of German Catholics," and who, moreover, had been mixing with the workers of his district, listening to their troubles and helping wherever he could.

On the other hand the Nazis did their damndest to enlist for their struggle against the Church those workers known to be agnostics or anti-religious, and anti-Catholic pamphlets (mostly of the grossest kind) were widely distributed among the working class; yet, in most of these efforts the Nazis achieved the very opposite of their desires, by actually helping to unite their foes. There are many known cases of agnostics having become religious under the stress of these times, and there are even more cases of workers, irrespective of their religious or anti-religious feelings, giving sincere sympathy and active support to their Catholic fellow-sufferers; Father Rossaint's is indeed one such case.

Since obviously, for considerations of space, it is impossible to attempt more than the merest outline of the Church struggle, I propose to take from my notes a few items



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concerning one single month, selected at random, mainly with the idea of conveying something of the atmosphere of the struggle:

*Frankfort.*—The Gestapo has dissolved and banned the Young Men's Catholic Association, as well as the Catholic Pupils' Union *Neu Deutschland* in the Diocese Limburg a.d. Lahn.

*Cologne.*—Seventy Catholic priests and a number of young men have been arrested for distributing pamphlets, one of which said that every Catholic must be prepared to fight against new heathenism and, if need be, to die for his Faith.

*Berlin.*—In eighteen hospitals, seventy-six kindergartens and four infirmaries Catholic nurses have been summarily dismissed and substituted by Nazis. Catholic property confiscated includes two hospitals, six nursing-homes, two convalescent homes, eight kindergartens, one school, three students' hostels, six orphan asylums, two apprentice hostels, and three domestic schools.

*Duisburg.*—The Catholic Hospital, one of the most modern in the Ruhr, has been closed by the Mayor of Duisburg. The Church authorities have vainly lodged a protest with the Government.

*Stuttgart.*—In the village of Arlen, some Catholic nurses, after many years' service, were summarily dismissed and substituted by Nazi girls. The congregation made a good collection to support the dismissed nurses whilst they were looking for new work. On the day before the collection was closed and about to be handed over to the girls, Gestapo men appeared at the priest's, demanded to see the collection, and confiscated the lot.

*Düren.*—Having been members of a Catholic Girl Guides' Group recently dissolved, two girls wore their uniforms in church. They were sentenced to four days' gaol "for unlawfully wearing a uniform."

*Trier.*—The priest of Busenberg in the Trier district was arrested for alleged secret meetings with members of dissolved Catholic Trade Unions. He was taken to Trier gaol.

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*Aschaffenburg.*—Merely for having admonished parents to send their children to church regularly, a local priest was arrested. At once the Mayor and the Sacristan called a meeting to demonstrate for the priest's release. Both of them and fourteen participants of the meeting were also arrested, several of the latter being Nazis. Thereupon a number of old Party members quit the Party, and excitement all over the neighbourhood ran so high that the priest and the other prisoners were finally released. Those Party members who had quit were now requested to rejoin the Party. They all refused. Most of them are farmers.

All of these incidents occurred in November 1937, and indeed the turn of that year and the first few weeks of 1938 were conspicuous for the persecution of Catholics. A high proportion of the seven thousand odd cases of criminal proceedings brought by the Nazis against the Catholics during the first five years of the regime took place at that time.

Then all of a sudden a change; no more "treason-trials," no more arrests, not a word against Catholics in either press or radio; instead, a stern order from Gestapo-Chief Himmler to the effect that it was not now desirable for Gestapo-men to resign their membership of the Church, provided they still retained it; within the same week came an order from Hess, the Führer's deputy, instructing the Party to withdraw patronage from the "German Christians" and not to interfere in any way with such Catholic schools as were still existent.

Familiarized with Nazi tactics the reader will easily guess that so much concentrated clemency must imply the imminence of some big "swoop"; indeed it did, and a glance at the date is enough. All this happened in February 1938, within a few weeks of Hitler's conquest of Austria. As Austria will later form the subject of a special chapter, it need only be said here that the temporary clemency gave

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way to even more ruthless oppression as soon as the new "swag" was safely in the bag.

The new wave of persecution was as ruthless in the newly conquered province as in the Reich, perhaps worse, and it gained particular momentum when, towards the end of the Sudeten crisis, and faced with the imminent possibility of war, Catholic priests were just as courageous as their Evangelical colleagues in holding Intercession Services, which, of course, were just as violently denounced as "High-Treason." The following passage is but one example of great courage in the pulpit:

I am very happy to see the church so full, and many new faces. I know what urge made you find the way to the church. How could it be otherwise? Already the powers of darkness challenging Jesus Christ have plunged various parts of the world into war. More and more people are beginning to see that no mundane power may assume the right to falsify the Word of God and to ban it from the heart of man. Sinister clouds darken the outlook of humanity. A handful of persons, guided by Satan, is about to plunge the world into a sea of blood. God bids those criminals halt, even though we ourselves may be forced to tread the path of suffering.

I may add that this was preached in a Rhineland church, with many officers and soldiers present in the congregation and obviously deeply impressed.

An even more significant example of popular resistance against Hitlerism is that year's record number of one hundred and thirty thousand Catholic pilgrims to St. Annaberg in Upper Silesia, even though the authorities had done all possible to stop or impede the pilgrimage by forbidding its advertisement in the churches and by refusing the usual special trains and other facilities. Tens of thousands came on foot, others in all kinds of makeshift vehicles. But it is most significant that this enormous crowd did what

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Annaberg pilgrims had never done before: they chanted, over and over again, a demonstrative chorus "*Christ ist unser Führer*" (Our Leader is Christ), nor did they try to conceal the political significance of using the word "Führer" in such context.

One more case of almost pathetic personal courage: in a small Bavarian village, the local priest (an elderly man) was so perturbed by the sufferings of the people and the Church that, to relieve his heart, he put it all into words, all he had experienced and seen in these six years of Hitlerism; then he made a scroll of what he had written, added a note that this was to tell future generations of what had once been possible in Germany, and buried the scroll among some bricks in the cupola of his church. It did not stay there long; somehow the Gestapo heard of it, unearthed it and gave it to the *Schwarze Korps* as substance of a juicy article (unaware of the despicable show they made of themselves by the juxtaposition of their own filthy abuse and the old priest's desperately sincere confession). For the time being the Nazi paper had the last word by the gleeful postscript that the old man was now being put to such useful work as carting stones in Dachau Concentration Camp. Nor indeed was he the only priest thus employed; nor would be for some time to come.

To sum up this chapter we may quote a rather significant passage from a speech made by Hitler when addressing some of the Party leaders.

Do not suppose that I am going to make the same mistake that Bismarck made. Bismarck was a Protestant and therefore did not know how to get the better of the Catholic Church. Providence has caused me to be a Catholic, and I know therefore how to handle this Church. If she will not accommodate herself to us, I will set in motion against her the Press, the Wireless and the Film; I will let loose upon her enough propaganda to knock

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her groggy (*dass ihr Hören und Sehen vergeht*). I know how to handle these fellows and how they are to be caught out. They shall bend or break—but, since they are no fools, they will bow their heads.

Well, he has neither bent nor broken the Church, nor indeed has the Church bent him; but that its staunch resistance has had (and is having) a good share in his ultimate fall there cannot be the shadow of doubt.

## The Opposition from the Peasants

Strictly speaking it is incorrect to deal with the peasants and farm-workers under the "non-socialist" heading; but to include their problem within the underground struggle of the two Socialist Parties simplifies nothing. A great many of the farmers, peasants and farm-workers are not Socialists; a great many of the farm-workers are. Very many are Catholics, and many others are staunch Protestants. Much of what was dealt with in former chapters applies to them too; yet they have a great many problems of their own. They are first and foremost peasants and farm-workers, and they form a considerable proportion of the population: nearly a quarter of the German people works on the soil.

Quite early in the regime they had this much in common with the workers, that they were given a number of pretty phrases and high-sounding titles in exchange for the more tangible loads imposed on them and liberties taken away. Just as the workers could enjoy the privilege of calling their bosses *Gefolgschaftsführer*,<sup>1</sup> and were given the Nazi "Workers' Front"<sup>1</sup> in place of their own Trade Unions, so were the peasants flattered by being described as "The First Estate" or even "The new aristocracy of blood and

<sup>1</sup> See p. 73.

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soil," and in place of their own unions they were given a Nazi organization called *Reichsnährstand*, which sounds much more pleasant in German than in its prosaic translation, "Reichs-Feeding-Estate." They were granted, moreover, a brand-new law called the *Erbbhof-Gesetz*<sup>1</sup>; all of which requires some explanation.

The division of the German soil is much as it was in Imperial Germany; neither the Republic nor the Nazis changed a state of things which grossly favoured the Junkers and other great landowners. To this day four hundred and twelve princely families (most notably the Hohenzollern) own, between them, 3,750,000 acres of the best soil. The average acreage of more than 1,700 of the biggest Junker estates is in the neighbourhood of 7,000. Three million German peasant holdings average 8 acres; but these are the more fortunate, since the vast majority of those working on the land have no soil to call their own, or at the most one to three acres. It has been estimated<sup>2</sup> that 18,700 of Germany's biggest estates would provide ample space to settle one and a half million peasant families.

It can thus be seen that the German peasant's problem is now, as it has always been, that of space; a problem which we have lately been encouraged to think of under the Nazi term *Lebensraum*, which they claim the entire people lacks.

How utterly ridiculous this claim is can be gauged from the above-mentioned figures, with the added consideration that few of these huge Junker estates are being properly exploited and many are shockingly wasted. In fact, we have so noted an agricultural authority as Professor Ries of Potsdam for the statement that, given proper exploitation,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 166 seq.

<sup>2</sup> By the Nazi Böttcher: *Wem gehört der deutsche Boden?* (Stubenrauch Verlag, Berlin).

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German soil (before the appropriation of Austria and other territories) could easily feed one hundred rather than sixty-five million people.

The perennial Nazi outcry for "more *Lebensraum*" was never anything but a cloak for an aggressive foreign policy, which in itself was nothing but a cloak for growing dissatisfaction and unrest within the Reich. How little the Nazis themselves believe in their *Lebensraum* swindle can be gauged from their own official organ *Völkischer Beobachter* of May 4, 1939, i.e. *after* the appropriation of almost all new territory acquired without gunshot:

It is our first and foremost task to increase our population in order to keep pace with recent political developments. We can compare the new Reich with a shoe and the population with a foot. The foot is at present too small for the shoe; either the foot has to grow into the shoe or the foot has to be satisfied with a smaller shoe.

Moreover, migration from the land into the towns had been steadily increased in the Third Reich, and it certainly cannot be explained by the increasing demand for armament workers; the demand for land workers was just as pressing, and the real explanation is the steadily growing dissatisfaction with working conditions on the land—so much so that a growing number of farm-workers preferred even the far from adequate conditions in the factories.

According to official Nazi statistics, wages for farm-workers have decreased by anything from 20 per cent to 32 per cent between 1931 and 1936, with a further downward tendency ever since. The lowest wage in the list is that of female farm-workers in Schleswig-Holstein, falling from 426½ Reichsmark per annum (roughly £21 at par) to RM.324 (roughly £16); highest in that wage list is the RM.708½ wage (about £35) earned by a Rhineland farm-worker in 1931, which fell to 480 marks (about £24) in 1936.



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According to other official Nazi statistics,<sup>1</sup> 165,000 regular agricultural workers left the land between 1935 and 1938, apart from 230,000 occasional agricultural workers and an unspecified number, at least as large, of younger sons and daughters of *Erbhof-Bauern*, i.e. farmers who, according to new Nazi law, had their farms entailed.

This brings us to one of the most important of Nazi novelties which, all these years, has earned them the curse of the overwhelming majority of the men and women working on the soil of Germany; incidentally, that famous *Erbhof* Bill, with its brutal suppression of the masses in favour of a chosen few, is as classical an example of Nazism as the misty "ideological" trimmings of "blood and soil" and "new aristocracy."

Thoroughly in keeping with the "blood and soil ideology," the Nazi approach to the peasants (or rather, to their more well-to-do minority) was on these lines: very well, we did not (nor shall we) keep our promise to settle you or your less fortunate fellow-peasants on some of the wasted Junker soil, but this need not worry *you*. *You* have no cause, either, to envy the Junkers, because we are making you a sort of Junker too. All we want from you is proof of your "pure aryan" descent back to the year 1800 and, of course, an assurance that you are staunch adherents of the Party. For this we will see that your farm can be neither mortgaged nor sold and, since you are one of the new aristocrats of blood and soil, we will also have your farm entailed for you, just like that of any noble Count or Prince. All this we are doing for you. Heil Hitler!

This may have been a shrewd move from the Nazi standpoint. But from the peasant's point of view it was utterly ludicrous to enforce the principle of primogeniture, customary in a few hundred wealthy houses of the nobility,

<sup>1</sup> Investigation of the Ministry of Labour, published on June 25, 1938.

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on hundreds of thousands of none too affluent peasant-farmers. There was, after all, that small difference of the absent bank account, from which to supply dowries for the daughters and careers in the Army or Diplomatic Service for the younger sons.

What inevitably happened was that the farmers' younger sons and daughters were "proletarized" and forced to swell the army of workers, either on the land or in the armament factories. This was exactly what the shrewd Nazis wanted; contrary to their frequent pretty speeches, they were for ever striving to accentuate rather than alleviate class distinctions. It is particularly typical that, with the term *Bauer* (Peasant) raised to signify new "nobility,"<sup>1</sup> it would apply to a minority only, the majority being declassed to mere farmers, and the idea being to favour and aggrandize the former at the cost of the latter. This must be taken quite literally, inasmuch as it has become a regular custom for the Nazis to give a "meritorious" *Erbhof-Bauer* (i.e. some staunch Party supporter) the adjacent land of some small-scale farmer officially considered "not fit to survive." In the one district of the Hohe Röhn, within the first few months of 1938, as many as 11,552 small farms (out of a total of 13,735 agricultural units) were proclaimed "unfit to survive," and well they might be, considering all the difficulties and restrictions, petty and otherwise, which small-scale farmers have to put up with in the Third Reich. But quite a number of those farms now proclaimed "unfit" had survived for centuries.

As to the favoured *Erbhof-Bauern* there are some six hundred thousand of them, only about a quarter of Germany's total independent peasantry, and they include quite a number of major and minor Party bosses who have

<sup>1</sup> An *Erbhof-Bauer* was entitled to wear a special badge in his button-hole and to nail a special sign over his door.

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invested some of their graft-money in German land and who, though probably they have never weeded a front-garden, let alone ploughed a field, have acquired the dignity (and privileges) of an *Erbhof-Bauer*. Men like Dr. Ley, Julius Streicher, and even Dr. Göbbels are among those who thus call themselves *Bauer*, laying due stress on such practical affinity to the soil of the fatherland—always a good subject for a pretty speech and a nicely posed photo.

Real peasants resent this sort of thing. Even the real *Erbhof-Bauern* do; for in spite of being favoured in a great many ways<sup>1</sup> they too have a lot to resent unless they happen to have some particular standing or contact within the Party. It is true that by the new law their farms can be neither sold nor distrained, but that does not help them in their frequent troubles over ready cash, nor must they court Nazi disfavour by falling behind with their rates and taxes, lest at a moment's notice they be robbed of all their privileges.

But one of their chief problems, of course, is that of the younger sons and daughters. So as fully to understand the practical effects of applying the noble law of primogeniture to German peasant-farmers, it must be borne in mind that most of them can afford little or no hired help, and that they practically depend on the family for all work. It has been for all time a tradition of German peasantry for the daughters and younger sons to do unpaid labour on the parental farm, on the understanding that on the father's death they would be appropriately recompensed, either in cash or kind, generally a strip of soil and some cattle. All this is strictly prohibited by the new law, with resulting discomfiture and family strife.

<sup>1</sup> All official county and community jobs, for example, are their exclusive domain, and they alone can command the almost unpaid help of "Hitler-Youth" and other Nazi organizations at harvest time.

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When an *Erbhof-Bauer* complains he must be careful not to do so loudly enough to irritate the Nazi authorities; to complain is a sin worse even than arrears in rates and taxes. "Political unreliability" might well cost him his entire farm, in spite of the Nazi law that proclaims that it must be neither sold nor divided, neither mortgaged nor distrained. But it can be taken away altogether, and this happens whenever an *Erbhof-Bauer* courts Nazi disfavour. It has happened on an average of just over a thousand times a year; in each case the farm was "handed over to a more trustworthy Party member," and the erstwhile "aristocrat of blood and soil," regardless of how many centuries his forbears had been tilling his land, was forced into the wilderness, probably following his own sons and daughters in the quest of hiring themselves out as farm labourers.

As farm labourers they would be under the most stringent regulations and not even allowed to change jobs without permission. There are a great many cases on record, such as that of a Thüringen land-worker who was threatened with a fine of RM.100 (£5) unless he returned immediately to work on an estate which he had left because of ill-treatment. Since this man, with an average daily cash-wage of RM.2 could not possibly pay such a fine, the slave had no option but to return to his erstwhile driver.

But many of the "independent" small-scale farmers are even worse off than the labourers who can no longer claim a strip of soil their own. There are close on two million who have not the "distinction" and the privileges of being *Erbhof-Bauern*; they have not a shred of independence left, being completely under the heel of the famous Nazi *Reichsnährstand*,<sup>1</sup> a gigantic mushroom growth of bureaucracy which controls the planning as well as the marketing of all agricultural produce in the Third Reich.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 164.

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No longer can the farmer sell his eggs, his milk, his cheese to his customers in town, as he has done from time immemorial. He has to deliver every particle to the local centre of the organization, which pays him cut-rate prices so as to have a large enough margin to finance its own overgrown bureaucratic machinery.

For milk, for example, which fetches 25-30 pfennig a litre in town, the Nazi Centre will pay the farmer 11-13 pfennig,<sup>1</sup> and for his other produce the scale is very much on the same lines.

On the other hand, the small farmer must pay very stiff and steadily increasing prices for his fodder, since he must deliver up all his corn and may no longer grow it for fodder; he must buy either imported fodder, from which the Nazi Centre extracts a huge profit,<sup>2</sup> or he can buy, at no cheaper price, home-grown fodder from one of the big Junker estates which, being primarily grain-growing, do not suffer nearly so much as the cattle farmers, a very typical instance of how Nazi policy favours the rich at the expense of the poor. In recent years the farmers have had to make do largely with fodder "mixtures" of inferior quality, which were said to have been largely responsible for the particularly alarming ravages of foot-and-mouth disease.<sup>3</sup>

But it is not merely the fact that there is no free marketing that annoys the farmer (and cuts his income severely); what rouses his wrath even more is that he is not even allowed to grow what he pleases, that all his planning, down to his own household budget, is done for him by Nazi overseers who can at all times come snooping around his

<sup>1</sup> These prices are pre-war.

<sup>2</sup> Argentine sweet corn costing RM.75 a ton at Hamburg has been sold to farmers at RM.160 a ton.

<sup>3</sup> Another reason was the shortage of barbed wire for separating an affected area from an unaffected one, a shortage due to the needs of the Army as well as the concentration camps.

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stables, his poultry-yard and even his wife's larder, to see that he doesn't keep back an egg or two for himself or a private customer.

There are innumerable cases on record of such petty restriction and persecution; out of a large authenticated file this case may be quoted as typical:

In a little village near Breslau a farmer's wife went across to her neighbour to borrow a few eggs for her own household. Carrying them back in her apron she chanced to meet a Storm-trooper, who demanded to see what she was carrying and, when she told and showed him, took the eggs and returned them to the neighbour, pointing out the illegality of the transaction, since those eggs should have been delivered to the local *Reichsnährstand* Centre. He then denounced the farmer to the police. The sentence: four weeks in gaol.

There are other grounds for complaint, such as the arbitrary and ruthless manner of expropriating peasants when their soil or a strip of it is required for military purposes, such as shooting-ranges, aerodromes, etc., to say nothing of Hitler's much publicized motor-roads, all of which serve mainly strategic purposes, built without the slightest consideration for the farms they traverse. This sort of trouble became particularly acute during the fifteen months prior to the war, when the "Siegfried Line" and other Western fortifications were being built with complete disregard to the farmland affected. Altogether the Nazis have expropriated for military purposes just over 2½ million acres of arable land, which is nearly twice as much as the soil reclaimed from marshes at a cost of 900 million marks, and with fanfares of publicity and sickening self-idolatry.

Another of the many reasons for growing discontent among the peasants is the increasing practice of forcing them to grow flax which, being tedious and particularly unlucrative, is very much resented, yet the Nazis insist

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(and enforce it ruthlessly), so as to be able to supply the textile industry without having to spend on flax imports some of the precious gold and foreign currency required to import essential raw materials for the armament industry.

The ever-growing needs of the army are a further cause of concern to the farmers: for instance, the havoc done to forests by the indiscriminate felling of trees, so as to supply the enormously increased demand for timber. The average German timber production in pre-Hitler days (according to statistics from 1925 to 1929) was 25 million cubic metres per annum, which was about all that German forests could reasonably yield, and which indeed had to be supplemented by imports. In 1937 German home production of timber had been forced up to 39 million cubic metres, and, with the added incentive of cutting down imports so as to save currency, home production in 1938 reached the staggering figure of 45 million. Although no figures are, of course, available for 1939, there can be no doubt that in that year the figure topped 50 million, which means that the Nazis are now felling more than double as many trees as German forests can reasonably afford to lose; a practice which, if it were allowed to continue for only a few years, would mean the ruin of the German forests and do incalculable harm to German agriculture.

We have not the space to give more than a most superficial account of the German peasants' suppression as well as their ever-growing discontent and active resistance. But for many years they have had their own "underground literature" in the shape of so-called "peasant letters," widely circulated at frequent intervals, particularly in the Rhineland and in the farm districts near Hanover.

In Southern Germany, ever since the early summer of 1938, peasants have had their own "illegal" newspaper too;

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it is called *Der Bundschuh* and appears quite regularly; so far, in spite of frantic efforts by the Gestapo, the editors and printing plant have not been caught. This is a typical quotation from one of the earlier issues:

Our brown rulers are guilty. They want everything for themselves: The milk—give it! Eggs—hand them over! Grain—deliver it! The cattle, the land, the children, the farm—they want more and more, they want it all!

Active resistance by the peasants was spontaneous and individual rather than organized in the early years of the regime. Country-wide organized resistance did not come much into the open before 1936, but throughout the summer of that year there was an almost uninterrupted series of strikes with regard to the delivery of milk; even frequent arrests of fellow-peasants would not deter the others from hiding most of their milk when the inevitable "snooper" of the *Reichsnährstand* called to collect it.

Summer 1937 was conspicuous for active resistance by the vegetable farmers in the vicinity of Hamburg; they actually dared to stage a noisy demonstration before the Palace of Hamburg's Nazi governor, a particularly brutal specimen (incidentally, an ex-convict) by the name of Kaufmann; a three weeks' delivery strike followed; but it did not lead to much, except a number of arrests.

It is usual for the peasants to convene a secret meeting as soon as one of the perennial Nazi decrees comes out, and quite often there follows another meeting with representatives of neighbouring villages, so as to discuss the possibility of some concerted action.

A typical case occurred in June 1938, in a little Westphalian village, when the Nazi controllers were expected to seize the corn. No sooner were their trucks sighted near the village than word went round: "the snoopers are coming."



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Acting on their prearranged decision, every one of the peasants barricaded their farms against the Nazi controllers, who finally left without the corn. Later, representatives of the villagers made a formal call of protest at the office of the local Nazi chief, and for once they achieved their object and kept their corn. An old peasant was heard to say: "Never as since them Nazis have been here has the village been so united."

Particularly stringent are the Nazi regulations with regard to the sale and slaughtering of pigs and cattle, and the penalties for violation of those rules are draconic. To quote just one of innumerable cases, there was a butcher in Lintfort (Rhineland) who, in May 1937, was sentenced to as much as seven years' hard labour because he had "unlawfully" bought and slaughtered a few pigs. He hanged himself in prison, and so did the peasant who had sold him the pigs, even before he had heard his sentence.)

Very typical is the solidarity of peasants, once some village has decided to offer resistance to the Nazis. Take that village in Holstein, for instance, where the peasants staged a grand reception, complete with flowers and bunting, when one of their fellows came home from a term in gaol for having broken one of the Nazi rules. There are too, innumerable cases of particularly hated Nazi overseers, collectors, and other bureaucrats having received a sound thrashing from a band of sturdy peasants, but not one of the perpetrators was ever given away despite the large rewards offered by the Gestapo.

Typical too is the attitude of peasants to the Jews and, in particular, to the one Jew each of them had been used to deal with in cattle trade and in many of their own private business affairs. Needless to say, the Nazi authorities from the start sought urgently to discredit the Jews in the eyes of the peasants and to oust them from their relations with

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the land; yet, almost every peasant would stand doggedly by "his" Jew, partly out of spite for the Nazis, and partly because he knew that the Jew had dealt more or less fairly with him for years, and that even at the worst he would never have tricked him so much as the Nazi overseers and collectors were doing. Even in the sixth year of the regime, in the pogrom year of 1938, the *Schwarze Korps* and other Nazi papers still had occasion to write bitter articles about the "special protection" certain Jews were enjoying from the peasantry. It was not until November 1938 that the last of them were ousted or put into concentration camps.

To give a rough idea of the general atmosphere of the peasants' resistance, here are a few extracts from some notes covering a single month of the year 1938:

*Birkenfeld* (Rhineland).—In the nearby village of Brucken the peasants were furious because some of their village funds had been used exclusively for Party purposes. They decided to pay neither rates nor taxes for the time being, and they persisted in spite of severe measures threatened by the Nazi executor. It should be added that nearly fifty of those peasants had, some years before, joined the S.A. (Brownshirts), and since most of them had not yet paid for their uniforms, the tense atmosphere brought a demand note to each of them from the local Nazi Office, to which they did not reply. Then came an order that each man who failed to pay forthwith was to return his uniform and thereby relinquish his status as Storm-trooper. Each one of these fifty men sent back his uniform, and thereby relinquished membership of the Party.

*Koblenz*.—From a peasant's letter: "... I used to have twelve cows, four horses, one tractor, 350 acres of corn-land and 60 acres of pasture. Now I am on the dole. And why? Bad harvest forced me to run into debt. I had hoped that the Nazis would see to it that we should get decent prices for our products; in that case I could have met my commitments. But we peasants are forced to deliver to the *Reichsnährstand* at prices quite out

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of proportion to what the townspeople have to pay, and to what we have to pay for manure and fodder. I fell into arrears with my payments, also with rates and taxes. Little by little my stable was emptied, until finally I had nothing left but the farm. Now that's been taken too, and the same will happen to many more peasants in the neighbourhood unless the mad doings of the *Reichsnährstand* are stopped in time."

*Saar District.*—In Mombach the peasants have refused to celebrate harvest-home, although it would have been a simple thing for them to give their farms the usual decoration of garlands and grapes. They merely wished to express their opposition to the regime. They were punished by a still greater reduction of the rations doled out to them.

*Heidesheim (Saar).*—The old Mayor here was sacked and, very much to the disgust of the peasants, replaced by a twenty-four-years-old Prussian S.S. man, a rabid Nazi, who soon earned the undying hatred and contempt of all local peasants and villagers. Finally he was thrashed within an inch of his life, but the Gestapo never discovered the perpetrators.

*Silesia.*—In a village here the leading peasant went to the *Reichsnährstand* Office and asked: was it forbidden to feed bran? Yes, it was, he was told. Said the peasant: he and his neighbours would go on feeding it nevertheless. Next day happened to be the harvest-home celebration, and since that village had hardly any flags out at all, the local Nazi boss sent one of his men to ask the meaning of it. "Never mind the flags," came the answer, "we think of our cattle first." In a nearby village, the peasants refused to donate anything to the "Winter-Relief" collection.<sup>1</sup> When the local Nazi boss sent them a sharp reminder, they returned a few paper-bags full of carrots.

*Mecklenburg.*—Small-scale peasants here, having not enough pasture, are generally forced to buy between 40 per cent and 60 per cent of the fodder they require. What with fodder prices increased anything between 20 per cent and 30 per cent in the course of the last three years, everybody is complaining. Moreover the fodder is none too good and often wet, which, owing

<sup>1</sup> See p. 81.

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to increased weight, means even bigger profits for the Junkers. As a result, cattle here are getting ever poorer and fetching ever lower prices. Enquiries of forty farmers in the neighbourhood have revealed that during the last three years they have gone back 26 per cent on oxen, 31 per cent on calves, 8 per cent on sheep, and 46 per cent on pigs. All their many protests to the Nazi authorities have been of no avail.

*Pomerania.*—A peasant here, when grumbling about his particular difficulties in getting fodder for his pigs, was told that after all the peasants had themselves voted for the present Government. "No," he said, "we didn't vote for Hitler. Just you come into one of our meetings, and you'll hear what the peasants think of Hitler."

One might well remark that cases like this are as petty as, for instance, that amusing incident that happened in a village near Jüterbog in the autumn of 1937, when all the peasants and most of the villagers refused to attend a big Nazi parade organized on the nearby historical "Bückeberg" (near the famous Hamelin) which was graced by the presence of the local Junkers as well as various big Nazi bosses. When these, on their return journey, were motoring through the village they were none too pleased to see Julius Streicher's famous poster "Dogs and Jews not admitted" removed and replaced by another, which read "Dogs and *Reichsnährstand* Bosses not admitted."

Petty? Certainly, and maybe irrelevant. Yet it is a myriad incidents like this, and some that are by no means petty, that go to prepare the peasants of Germany for the inevitable day of reckoning with their Nazi task-masters.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# The Opposition from the Craftsmen and Shopkeepers

No group in Germany has had more reason to be disappointed by the Nazi regime than the craftsmen and the small shopkeepers; for it was they who, more than any other class, had been showered with Hitler's promises during his fourteen years' struggle for power.

It was those "lower-middle" classes which, more than any other, Hitler appealed to; after all, he was himself one of them by origin. It was their yearnings, frustrations and dreams that helped in forming his own vague, nebulous ideology from a dozen half-baked and undigested ingredients. To them he promised a veritable paradise on earth: to all those under-nourished and over-pompous low-grade officials, all those millions of malcontent shopkeepers and craftsmen and frustrated artisans—the "petty bourgeois" who, often earning less than a skilled worker, were yet so jealous of their class distinction and dignity that they were called "stiff-collar-proletarians"; for, indeed, they would rather stint themselves of a meal than of a collar and a tie.

As to the craftsmen, Hitler promised them, in the midst of this machine age, a glorious renaissance of the grand old days of German craftsmanship when every skilled trade, as the proverb said, had its base of pure gold. Every struggling artisan could please to picture himself, in the forthcoming

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Third Reich, as a sort of twentieth-century Hans Sachs of *Meistersinger* fame, admired by everyone and made secure from such ugly realities as the murderous competition of modern mass production.

As to the shopkeepers, Hitler gave them equally pretty promises; they were to be the backbone of honest German trade and, moreover, he promised to rid them, as soon as he would be in power, of the "unfair competition" of the Department Stores, particularly unfair because—so he said—they were all in Jewish hands.

That was, in point of fact, not quite the truth; but it mattered little. For when Hitler did come to power all that happened to the Jewish Department Stores was that the Jewish owner<sup>1</sup> was removed and for him was substituted some trustworthy Party man with the right kind of contact "higher up." All of which was surely most pleasant and lucrative for the few persons concerned, though, for the hundreds of thousands of hard-pressed small shopkeepers, it must have made precious little difference whether or not the head of the Department Store that was ruining them could boast of a perfectly undiluted, untainted Nordic blood-stream.

That under modern conditions the multitude of German retail shops is bound to be severely curtailed is not Hitler's fault, and yet he is guilty of a twofold crime in this context: firstly, by having dazzled the small shopkeepers with promises which he must have known to be nothing but cheap demagoguery; secondly (much more fundamental and far-reaching), by his deliberate efforts to limit the turnover of consumer-goods for the sake of armaments—which,

<sup>1</sup> In many cases the third or fourth generation of those who had built up the store, and yet the owner could count himself lucky if he salvaged as much as 5 to 10 per cent of his property's real value, in the course of a process called "aryanization," though "expropriation" would seem a better word for it.

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practically speaking, meant sacrificing the comfort of the nation (and incidentally the prosperity of the shopkeeper) to the all-important object of building up a gigantic war-machine for aggressive purposes. All this has been expressed with admirable precision in Göring's famous slogan "Guns rather than butter"; it would be equally well to say "Oil rather than silk-stockings" or "Iron ore rather than bananas." It is only logical that the Nazis had to deplore every scrap of foreign currency "wasted" on the import of, say, China tea when it could have been employed in importing manganese; you can make people drink herb-tea, even though its taste is not very nice, but you cannot finish steel plates for battle cruisers without manganese.

From this it should be quite obvious that to the Nazis it was vitally necessary to screw wage-scales down as low as ever compatible with the endurance and patience of the people. In order to go through with their armament programmes, the Nazis had to reduce the nation's purchasing power for consumer goods to an absolute minimum; all of which is bad for trade, not so bad for the big industrialist, but very bad for the small shopkeeper.

Before gauging to what extent (if any) the growing discontent engendered by these developments can be assessed as an oppositional force of political importance, some figures are necessary.

According to the latest pre-war statistics, there should be approximately 800,000 retail shops in Germany (excluding Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia): 432,031 of these shops are listed as provision stores, employing an aggregate of 1,660,000 persons. By adding something like 120,000 travelling salesmen and 180,000 hawkers and ambulant tradesmen, as well as the staffs of roughly 200,000 small restaurants, public-houses, inns, etc., we arrive at an

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aggregate of just over 4,500,000 persons considered as occupied in retail trade.

As to the above-mentioned provision stores, it should be borne in mind that more than half of them, viz. 246,787, are so poor as to be exempt from income tax; only about a quarter of the total (110,566) net more than RM.3,000 (£150 at par) and as many as 74,678 of them net an annual income of from RM.1,500 to 3,000 (£75 to £150) only. Which means that about 75 per cent of those shopkeepers earn less than a skilled worker.

What is especially responsible for the growing plight of the shopkeeper in the Third Reich is the increasing shortage of the rations doled out to him by the authorities, coupled with growing prices and deteriorating quality. He must, moreover, pay for these goods in advance, even though delivery often takes from two to three months, while his margin of profit has been reduced from the customary 20 to 30 per cent in pre-Nazi days to 10 to 15 per cent or even less. Rather typical is this extract from a report issued by the Nazi *Wirtschaftskammer* (Chamber of Economics) for Berlin-Brandenburg:

. . . Bread, butter, eggs, sugar, beer, margarine and sausages are the principal articles of . . . retail trade. The margin of profit being 7·5 to 12 per cent only, it fails to cover overhead expenses which are frequently between 10 and 15 per cent.

No less grievous to the shopkeeper is the never-ending stream of rates, taxes and all kinds of special contributions exacted by the Nazis, to say nothing of the severe fines imposed whenever one of innumerable regulations or decrees is violated. Here are two random cases from an enormous mass of similar ones on record:

A small shopkeeper had laid in a stock of tomatoes. He failed to go to market that week, and being unaware of some new



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regulation changing the retail price of tomatoes, he sold the rest of his stock at the old price. He had to pay a fine of 30 Marks.

Even more "petty," and yet most typical of constant Nazi surveillance, is this case:

A shopkeeper had just acquired a new consignment of sausage, and for the time being placed it in a drawer marked "2 marks per pound." Just at this moment, the Nazi controller happened to come in and inquired the price of the new consignment. "RM.2.20 per pound," said the shopkeeper, "I'll put it in its proper drawer right away." "But it's in the 2-mark drawer," said the controller; "you'll either have to sell it at 2 marks, or you'll have to pay a fine of 10 marks."

It goes without saying that, for the various reasons mentioned, an ever-growing number of shopkeepers has been forced to close down as the Nazi regime progressed. In Berlin alone, from December 1936 to December 1937, retail shops decreased from 52,822 to 41,945; and in Munich, during the first few months of 1939, as many as 1,500 milk and provision shops were closed down. As a matter of fact, there can be no doubt that the above-mentioned general figures, compiled from official statistics early in 1939, no longer apply, considering the rapidly increasing pace at which, ever since the Nazis came to power, the dying of the German retail trade has been progressing. )

I should perhaps say the "killing" rather than "dying"; for obviously—and for the reasons already explained—the Nazis, once in power, had no use for the small shopkeeper. They preferred to see him at work in an armament factory rather than selling consumer-goods whose importation hindered instead of facilitated the armament of the Reich. In such circumstances it is comprehensible that the Nazi "Labour Front" consistently warned young people against choosing such trades as "bakery, butchery, tailoring,

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paper-hanging, bookbinding, carpentry, or waiting and barber's work."

Early in 1939 the Nazis gave the *coup de grâce* to a great many shops by new decrees setting forth a scale of turnover which had to be reached if the shop wished to remain open. At Mannheim, for instance, provision shops had to show a minimum turnover of RM.10,000 per annum, and since almost 40 per cent of them could not possibly reach that standard they have no doubt been forced to close in the meantime.

Nothing could more clearly show the Nazi treatment of shopkeepers than the following candid and cynical admission in an official speech by a prominent Nazi business manager by the name of Bulla, reported in the Rhineland Nazi organ *Westdeutscher Beobachter* of November 19, 1938:

The retail trade is still overcrowded. To overcome the shortage of skilled labourers the manpower recruitable from the retail trade is unfortunately not too well suited. . . . Nevertheless, every possibility to sift uneconomical enterprises should be used so as to give the healthy ones their full share. This is also in the interests of the tax authorities, which get no revenue worth speaking of from these small uneconomical concerns. . .

Having thus skimmed with seven-league-boots the surface of a problem which, properly treated, would require a book by itself, what lesson may we learn from it?

We have learned that, for several years already, some millions of Germans in retail trade (and their dependents) must have been bitterly disappointed by the Nazi regime, the more so as they had pinned particular hopes on its advent to power. But while it might be taken for granted that a number of so many malcontents will at least not retard any revolutionary movement, from whatever source it may arise, can we expect from them any revolutionary initiative?

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In all probability, no; and we shall come to the same conclusion when we have examined the position of the craftsmen who, in many ways, are in much the same boat.

Let us examine, first of all, a very typical budget of a South German craftsman (the date is 1937).

	RM.
2 per cent Turnover tax (of RM. 2400 gross income) ..	48
Income tax .. .. .	85
Trade tax .. .. .	10
Community tax.. .. .	15
Citizen tax .. .. .	36
Church tax .. .. .	3
Guild subscription .. .. .	24
Winter-Relief <sup>1</sup> subscription .. .. .	3
Craftsmen's Chamber .. .. .	4
Health Insurance .. .. .	60
<hr/>	
Total .. .. .	288

Estimating RM.1,100 for raw materials and overheads and various minor contributions to Nazi Funds (all "voluntary" and invariably collected more or less by gentle force), the man's net income sinks below RM.1,000 a year, less even than that of many an unskilled worker.

It is almost a certainty that, by now, this particular craftsman has lost his independence and that he is working as a labourer in an armaments factory, which is exactly what the Nazis want. For most craftsmen make excellent skilled workers, and of these the Third Reich can never have enough. After all, you cannot commission a U-boat at a craftsman's shop; so you have to get the craftsman to come to the dockyard and help to build one there.

Let us take, more or less haphazardly, a number of authenticated reports, a few out of hundreds of similar

<sup>1</sup> See p. 87.

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ones. They may convey a clearer and more vivid picture of the prevailing atmosphere than any lengthy analysis of the condition of craftsmen in the Third Reich. All cases quoted are dated July 1938.

*Berlin.*—Report from a baker: . . . We are about fed up now. Every new Guild meeting is put over by the Nazis with any amount of ballyhoo. They put laurel-trees on the platform, and they have flags and bunting all over the place, and a big band to play the Nazi songs. But when you've been for the umpteenth time and thought that for once maybe they'll talk about our real troubles—no, sir: nothing doing. Not a word on how to help us, not one word of practical advice,—nothing, absolutely nothing. They just want us to go to the dogs and they don't care two hoots about it.—Well, once they did give me a piece of advice: why don't I go and train for a factory?—Give up my shop, eh? 12,000 marks invested in my machinery and outfit? Lose all I have in the world? A fat lot they care! Out of 150 bakers in my district, only twenty came to the last Guild meeting. The others just don't come, although each time they are stuck for a 3-marks fine.—All we hear at those meetings is propaganda for the Party; they want all bakers to take out a membership card; but most of us think they should stick it up their ——. <sup>1</sup> You can take it from me: we're all about fed up . . . our goods are getting worse from day to day because of all those newfangled substitutes we have to use. Where we used to take margarine we now get tallow only, and even that is much worse than that of last year. We've even had to put mineral oil into our dough, and the cake stank something terrible; many customers refused to buy it. . . . The sort of special margarine we need for certain pastry dough we can only get when buying the same quantity of "*Ostfiska-Ersatz*," which contains 30 per cent fat only. . . . Worst of all is that new fish-albumen which they charge us at 13½ marks per kg.; in the old days we could get decent albumen, imported from China and Jugoslavia, at 6 marks per kg. Now we can only get this

<sup>1</sup> There follows a most unparliamentary expression.

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when buying some of the fishy stuff too. . . . Bread-flour contains 3 per cent potato-flour and all sorts of other things, such as *Eilefarin*, *Biol*, *Pax*, and any amount of other trash; wheat bread starts to get stale after half an hour . . . as to cake, we've got to use again even old crumbs, and if we want American nuts we can just whistle for them. . . .

Very typical and significant too is the following:

*Saarbrücken*.—A number of locksmiths here and in the neighbourhood clubbed together to send a delegation to Berlin, so as to plead with the authorities that they should get allotted some iron for private jobs outside the armaments industry. The men were told that this was impossible since all iron was needed for more important purposes. As a result, all those locksmiths suffered a considerable cut in their incomes, since they had to refuse any private job. Resentment is particularly strong because the Saar, after all, is one of the biggest iron-producing districts in the country.

Rather typical of the Nazi practices which cause particular resentment is the following:

*Munich*.—The Nazi leader of the Carpenters' Guild had been removed from his post, after the majority of members had passed a vote of No Confidence. The reason was the man's utter corruption. But having some special pull in the Party, the man went to someone higher up and was promptly reinstated. The Nazis did not dare, however, to announce this at a meeting. Members were informed by circular.

Here is another typical case of plight due to Nazi war economy:

*Cologne*.—Report from an independent tailor: . . . Most of our work nowadays is turning old suits and frocks which people much prefer to the quality of the new *ersatz*-cloth. The cost of making a suit has gone up to 55-60 marks; it used to be 45. Trimmings that used to cost 10-12 marks now cost 15-18. Lining is as high as 3½ marks a metre, about one mark

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more than it used to be; decent wool-serge is unobtainable, and horsehair has gone up to 3 marks a metre, almost double the old price, and it isn't even genuine. All *ersatz*. Camelhair is either unobtainable or prohibitive; sewing cotton that used to be 48 pfennigs for 1,000 metres has gone up to 58, and basting thread costs 23 pfennigs, though the quality is not nearly as good as it used to be at 10-12 pfennigs. Buttons are very inferior too, and very expensive. Cloth, at prices ranging from 18 to 28 marks a metre is terrible compared with what we were used to. It is quite impossible to make a suit that is at all wearable (though by no means first class) under RM.200. . . .

Most significant of all is the following statement dealing with the most recent Nazi device for settling, from their own view-point, the problem of the independent craftsman.

*Munich.*—Independent craftsmen who don't happen to have taken their master's degree are now required to pass the examination within the next few months; if they don't, they have to shut up shop and go to work in an armament factory. The trouble is that the fee for the examination has been fixed at 200 marks, which has to be paid all at once, and this, of course, hardly one of the small independent craftsmen here is in a position to do.

If the Nazis wanted—as indeed they did—to give the dying class of independent craftsmen a knock-out blow, they could not have thought of a better and quicker method than that of enforcing those “master's certificate” examinations at a prohibitive fee. As a matter of fact, during the last fifteen months or so before the war, that method was almost universally employed all over the Reich, with the result that, after more than 104,000 independent craftsmen had lost their status from April 1936 up to the autumn of 1938, a further 150,000 were added within the last pre-war year, mainly because they were not, in a position to pay

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their examination fees. Almost to a man they were forced to go to work in arms factories.

Summing up, we may safely assert that the German craftsmen and artisans are yet another substantial group of the population which from being at one time keen supporters of the Nazi regime have turned to bitter enmity; and even though no direct political initiative might be expected from them as a group, it must be borne in mind that a great many of them have meanwhile joined some of the more militant opposition groups and have become quite active members.

## CHAPTER NINE

# The Opposition from Conservative Quarters

The term "conservative" is used because there is no other convenient word; but at the moment of writing there is no such thing as a "Conservative Party" in Germany, either "underground" or otherwise. In fact, there has been none since November 1918; for in the Weimar Republic the *Deutsch-Nationale Partei* and a few others absorbed the conservative element of Germany which, even when represented in the Cabinet, did not wish to "conserve" the existent state of things but mainly to re-establish some form of Monarchy, preferably Hohenzollern.

For the purpose of this book, however, the term is used in its widest sense, embracing all those who by tradition and outlook somehow conform to what in the English-speaking world is generally understood by "conservative"; and since this, in the Third Reich, includes a great many Catholics and even more adherents of the Confessional Church, there is bound to be some overlapping with previous chapters. This cannot be avoided when trying to squeeze under a few stereotyped headings so complex and fluid a matter as the classification of a great people—particularly at a time of strife and violent material and emotional upheaval.

As to the erstwhile political representation of the German



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"Tory" element, principally the *Deutsch-Nationale Partei*, it did, after all, help the Nazis into the saddle by taking them into that Coalition Government of January 30th, so soon to be purged of its former Conservative majority. But even much later, long after the Conservative Cabinet majority of 4 to 1 had been reversed still more substantially in the Nazi favour, a great many Conservative leaders were loath to see the impossibility of reaching some permanent compromise with the Nazis, some definite state of "settling down." Such a state of stability the regime could never fulfil because of its own inherent restlessness, by which it must be driven on and on to its own inevitable destruction.

This does not imply that the Nazis are not capable of compromise at times and within limits. They compromised with the Army; they had to, at times. They compromised with the big Industrialists, who to some extent could please themselves to think that they had things very much their own way; yet many of the Industrialists must often have felt like the magician in Goethe's poem, who could not rid himself of the spirits once he had summoned them.

It is impossible to say when exactly, in the short history of the Third Reich, Conservative opposition became an organized force of any importance; when it did it certainly had a broader popular basis than whatever immediate opposition the Nazis had to cope with from their erstwhile colleagues in the Cabinet, guided by resentment and jealousy as much as by apprehension and genuine worry about the fate of the country.

Very broadly speaking, it may be said that the first round ended in a victory for the Conservatives; I am alluding to what might be considered the first period of the regime, ending with the famous "blood purge" of June 30, 1934. In another chapter there will be more about

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that historical massacre, the principal result of which was the smashing of every "leftist" tendency within the Party and a considerable strengthening of Hitler's own power, incidentally leading to increased suppression of every kind of opposition. At the moment we are concerned with one of the aspects of the purge only: that it marked Hitler's important decision whether to side with his own old henchmen, as represented by the colossally overgrown Brownshirt Army, or with the Military and Conservative element, as represented by the big Junkers and Industrialists. Hitler decided for the big guns and money-bags, and it was merely due to some side-issues that a number of prominent representatives of the victorious Party had also to bite the dust during that famous "night of the long knives."

As a matter of historical accuracy we cannot fail to mention here one of the events that foreshadowed the "purge," an event which, as an expression of conservative opposition, was conceded inordinate importance at the time: the speech delivered by Franz von Papen at Marburg University on June 17, 1934. That speech was certainly a bombshell; many thought that it marked the end of Nazism, and that the Conservatives would snap back into power.

Apart from various subtly veiled hints and threats, and not-so-veiled propaganda for the restitution of the Monarchy, the speech dealt mainly with the nation-wide propaganda campaign "against all carpers and critics" which Göbbels had launched a few weeks earlier—in itself a highly significant, though somewhat ludicrous affair. This is what von Papen had to say about it:

Open manly discussions would be of more service to the German people than, for instance, the present state of the German Press, of which the Reich Minister for Enlightenment

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and Propaganda asserted: "It has no longer any physiognomy."<sup>1</sup> This defect is beyond doubt. . . . When, however, the proper organs of public opinion do not clear up sufficiently the mysterious obscurity which at present seems to overspread German popular opinion, the statesman himself must intervene to call a spade a spade. Such action should prove that the Government is strong enough to stand decent criticism—that it is mindful of the old maxim: "Only weaklings suffer no criticism."

Very sensible and courageous, though not nearly as significant, politically, as the following passage from the speech:

. . . There is no end of talk of a second wave which is to complete the German revolution. Whoever irresponsibly toys with such ideas should not hide from himself that a second wave might be followed by a third, and that he who threatens the guillotine might soonest fall its victim. Nor is it clear where such a second wave should lead. There is much talk of the coming socialization. Have we gone through an anti-Marxist revolution in order to carry out a Marxist programme? For every attempt to solve the social problem by collectivization of property is Marxism. . . .

This, of course, alludes to the decision Hitler would very soon be forced to make; but it should be noted that as to Ernst Röhm and all the other old Party henchmen to be "purged" within a fortnight, nothing was ever further from their minds than even the faintest thought of Marxism.

Highly significant, too, for the prevalent mood of the people are these final passages of von Papen's speech:

<sup>1</sup> Considering that his own Ministry, by the most rigid daily control of even such matters as headings, spacing, etc., saw to it that one German newspaper practically looked like the other, this is probably the best joke ever made by the little Propaganda Doctor, who has repeatedly shown signs of a somewhat sardonic sense of humour.

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The Government<sup>1</sup> is well informed of how self-seeking, lack of character and chivalry, mendacity and presumption are trying to expand on the troubles of the German revolution.<sup>2</sup> Nor is the Government shutting its eyes to the recognition that its great treasure of the German people's confidence is imperiled. If one desires closeness and unity with the people, one must not underestimate the people's sagacity. One must reciprocate its confidence, and one must not everlastingly keep it in leading-strings. The German people realizes the gravity of its situation, its economic distress, and discerns clearly the defects of many laws born of emergency. It has a delicate sensibility for coercion and injustice and mocks at clumsy attempts to deceive it with whitewash. . . . No organization, no propaganda, however excellent, would be able by themselves to maintain confidence in the long run. I therefore all along held a different opinion of the propaganda movement against so-called critics. Not by incitement, especially of youth, not by threats against the helpless part of the nation—only by a confidential talking-it-over with people can confidence and devotion be raised. The people . . . will follow the Leader if it is permitted to co-operate in counsel and deed, if any critical word is not interpreted as malevolence, and if despairing patriots are not branded as enemies of the State. . . . People treated as morons, however, have no confidence to give away. It is time for joining together in fraternal love and respect for all fellow-countrymen, so as not to disturb the labours of serious men and to silence doctrinal fanatics. . . . History is waiting for us—but only if we show ourselves worthy of it.

In many ways, what with its mixture of good will, recklessness, foolishness and futility, a typical von Papen

<sup>1</sup> It should be borne in mind that when this speech was made, von Papen was still a member of the Cabinet (in the capacity of Vice-Chancellor.)

<sup>2</sup> To avoid confusion in the reader's mind: whenever von Papen speaks of the "German revolution" he means, of course, the barter by which Hitler and two of his Party members were admitted into a Coalition Government, and in which von Papen himself played so prominent a part.

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speech; typical also inasmuch as hardly a word of it was Papen's own.

The author of that particular speech was Dr. Edgar J. Jung, a sincere patriot and devout Catholic, who, in a little book<sup>1</sup> published in the early months of the regime (and since banned) had expressed the opinion that totalitarianism was impossible in Germany because two-fifths of the population was Catholic, and because Nazism was really nothing but a forerunner of a Conservative counter-revolution. Numerous other points from that book (including some laudable and well put arguments for the right of free speech) were also incorporated in von Papen's famous Marburg speech which was, in a further and grim respect, typically Papenish, inasmuch as others had to pay the penalty of his courage.

Dr. Jung was arrested a day or two later, and when the "purge" came he was murdered in the most bestial manner, along with two more of von Papen's close friends and collaborators (and occasional authors of his speeches). But von Papen himself escaped, minus a few front teeth. It was certainly his narrowest escape so far; for a few days he was under strict house-arrest, and it was only the timely intervention of a special Reichswehr<sup>2</sup> guard that saved his life.

Since, then, the Reichswehr must be considered the victor, or rather the usufructuary, of June 30th, we must

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Jung: *Sinndeutung der deutschen Revolution*, Berlin, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> It is ironical that while the German Army began to be developed mainly for aggressive purposes, it still retained the designation "Reichswehr" given to that real "Reich Defence" ("Wehr" being the German word for defence) of a mere one hundred thousand men granted at Versailles. The more the Army grew, the more stress seems to have been put on that little word "Wehr," which we find prominently and somewhat ostentatiously displayed in every conceivable form of neo-German terminology, such as "*Wehr-Wissenschaft*," "*Wehr-Gedanke*," "*Wehr-Sport*," "*Wehrtechnisch*," "*Wehrbewusst*," "*Wehrbereitschaft*," "*Wehrmacht*," etc.

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now turn to that most complex, most important sector of Conservative opposition against the Nazi regime.

Whilst there can be no doubt that for several years—almost since the beginning of the Third Reich—there has been such a thing as a Reichswehr opposition to the regime, what makes it so complex is that we must always remember that: (a) to a considerable but varying degree the Reichswehr had no grounds for opposition; (b) much of what opposition there was applied to some specific matter which was soon settled one way or the other, mostly, thanks to his long series of successes, in Hitler's favour; (c) the larger the Army grew once conscription had come, the more it was inevitable that the privates and even the N.C.O.s became an oppositional factor, which in turn reacted on the Officer Corps; (d) the Reichswehr officers, apart from their very strong *esprit de corps*, must be considered individually when trying to assess their attitude towards the regime in their capacity as, say, Christians, or as friends of certain Nazi victims, or even merely from the viewpoint of social resentment; (e) the Reichswehr's has a very strong tradition of "aloofness from politics."

To deal with the last point first, the "politics taboo" principle is a tradition of almost every Army, but it was particularly strong in the old Imperial German Army on which the Reichswehr very closely modelled its own tradition. But there is this peculiar difference, that while the Imperial officers, almost to a man, had no politics except the traditional "With God for Kaiser and Fatherland"<sup>1</sup> the Reichswehr officers (the seniors being almost all of them survivors from the Imperial Army) could not

<sup>1</sup> It must be borne in mind that in Imperial Germany the Officer Corps had no need to be concerned with politics, being themselves safeguarded through their own brothers and fathers who held almost all key positions in industry as well as in the Civil and Diplomatic Service.

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but be interested in the politics of the Republic as well as of the Third Reich, even though they always knew how to keep up an appearance of haughty aloofness.

It is typical that in the abortive Kapp Putsch of 1920 the real wire-pullers, Generals Ludendorf and von Lüttwitz, remained well in the background and allowed a little-known civilian to get the limelight and to do the dirty work. Still more significant is the attitude of the Reichswehr during the equally abortive, though far more dangerous, Hitler Putsch of 1923. At that time, General von Seeckt, the extremely shrewd and capable first Chief of the Reichswehr, was still at its head and ordered his troops to march against the Putschists, even though Ludendorf was amongst them. It is a moot point whether von Seeckt acted as he did out of loyalty to his Republican Government or because he was shrewd enough to perceive the futility of the Munich Putsch, which could not at that time have spread northwards because of the determined attitude of the workers of Berlin. But the fact remains that a little later, when the Government proclaimed a state of emergency and vested all powers in the Reichswehr, von Seeckt haughtily disdained his easy chance to establish a sort of permanent dictatorial Reichswehr rule when the crisis was over. He preferred to hand the power back to the Social-Democratic Government, and nothing could be more significant than two lines of dialogue spoken in the process.

"Are you sure," asked the short and plump ex-saddler President Ebert with ill-concealed apprehension, "are you quite sure that the Reichswehr stands behind the Government?"

"Herr Reichspräsident," said von Seeckt, rising to his full height, as he screwed in his flashing monocle, "The Reichswehr stands behind *me*!"

The overwhelming majority of Reichswehr officers,

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monarchists at heart, did not even try to conceal their dislike of the Republic, but they served it with a loyalty born of their strong professional pride; they were a clique by themselves, shut off from the outer world. Nor did they show any favouritism to the budding Nazi growth, and calmly disowned such of their indiscreet fellows who did, at a time when it was, let us say, premature to do so. They could wield the strongest political power in the country, merely through the weight of their arms and the constant doubt as to what they might or might not do in certain circumstances, and in spite of their apparent aloofness from politics, they fully availed themselves of such power.

With the advent of the Nazis, the Reichswehr certainly had no reason to grumble: conscription meant rapid promotion for officers and, as the army grew, increasing power and status.

Friction first came with the ambitions of Brownshirt Leader Ernst Röhm, who wanted the War Ministry for himself and the mass incorporation within the Reichswehr of large numbers of his overgrown Brownshirt Army. The Reichswehr would have none of this and, of course, won hands down when the whole matter came to a head in the "purge."

Reichswehr officers had a way of looking down on overblown pompous Party "Generals" and assessing them according to whatever humble rank, if any, they might have held in the Imperial Army. Moreover, the Reichswehr officers were quite outspoken in what they thought of the military qualification of the various Party formations and that, never mind how many years of training a man might have had in the S.A. or S.S., he was still the rawest of recruits so far as the Reichswehr was concerned.

On the other hand, Party ranks and particularly the *corps d'élite* of the fashionable S.S. stood in comprehensible awe



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of Reichswehr officers, aping their bearing, their mannerisms and the cut of their uniforms. Coupled with this was much jealousy and intrigue, leading to repeated friction.

Hitler's own relations to the Reichswehr must be viewed in much the same light. He could never quite forget—and this was thoroughly reciprocal—that he was merely a corporal in the old army, and he was never quite at ease with his Reichswehr generals,<sup>1</sup> vacillating between humility and arrogance, contempt and adulation.

Moreover, he was always a good hater, with a prodigious memory for injuries once received. In the 1934 purge he killed old Baron von Kahr, who had lived in peaceful retirement for ten years, merely because he had queered his pitch in 1923. For similar reasons he axed General von Hammerstein, his first Commander-in-Chief; a few months before Hitler's appointment, Hammerstein had advised old Hindenburg against offering the Chancellorship to the "Bohemian corporal"—Hitler had heard of this and he never forgot.

The Hammerstein crisis was the first but by no means the only one of several more or less serious clashes with the Army Command, each of them for a different reason, each of them (up till now) patched up, but each of them resulting in some friction.

It was partly Hitler's shrewdness, but more his good luck, that at a time when he most needed the good will of

<sup>1</sup> Much of Hitler's personality can, of course, be explained by an inferiority complex turned into megalomania. It has been said that the whole course of history might have been altered if only, way back in 1912, those Vienna Academy professors had not insisted that Hitler was hopelessly untalented for painting as well as architecture, and that he had better give up all dreams of art and seek some honest living instead. An interesting theory, which is probably quite correct so far as Hitler is concerned; but it would not have changed history, for, given the same political and economic circumstances, some other "Führer" would have been found to play Hitler's part.

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the generals he happened to be particularly well in with them. It was just after the June 1934 "purge," when the Army had it all their own way, that Hitler needed their good will, because a few weeks later old Hindenburg died and the long anticipated question of the succession became acute.

For Hitler it was, of course, out of the question, being merely the Chancellor, to suffer another Reich President to be set above him, even if, like Hindenburg, he was only nominally head of the State. Hitler wanted to combine the posts of Chancellor and President; he wanted to become the "Führer." But this created a rather ticklish position for the Reichswehr: President von Hindenburg had never been a party leader, and President Ebert before him had relinquished leadership of the Social-Democratic Party as well as all his other party offices when accepting the Presidency. Now the Army was to take the oath of allegiance to a head of the State who, at the same time, remained Party leader. Hitler got away with it, not so much on account of Hindenburg's alleged "political testament,"<sup>1</sup> but because a strong enough Reichswehr opposition did not happen to exist at that time.

This did not exclude repeated subsequent clashes at almost regular intervals, and since each of them was centred

<sup>1</sup> It has been stated on rather reliable authority that this much publicized document was an out-and-out forgery, substituted by the Nazis for the aged President's real testament, which is said to have suggested von Papen as a provisional President charged with the task of re-establishing the Hohenzollern Monarchy. This would certainly have been much more in keeping with Hindenburg's not exactly flexible ideas than the incredible document "discovered" in even more incredible and mysterious circumstances. But, pending irrefutable evidence through the opening of archives, this much can be said with certainty even now: several passages of the document bear the unmistakable mark of Dr. Göbbels' style, to such an extent that the very least the Nazis can be accused of is a generous "correction," if not a complete falsification of Hindenburg's testament which, in its published form, put implicit trust in Adolf Hitler and besought the German people to accept him as "Führer." ■

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round some particularly prominent General, such as von Blomberg, von Fritsch, von Stülpnagel, von Beck, and many others, friction was unavoidable, though never of lasting importance.

For it must be remembered that Hitler's confidence, when dealing with recalcitrant generals, increased in the same degree in which, via stations such as the Rhineland occupation, the Austrian "Anschluss," the Sudeten Coup, etc., his own shrewd judgment of the British and French Governments' gullibility or reluctance to interfere, was time and again vindicated against the generals' warning that the German Army was in no position yet to justify such appalling risks; in the same degree, naturally, much of the High Command's objective opposition gave way to genuine recognition of Hitler as a political pace-maker, even though friction remained on the personal grounds of indignities suffered by so many generals and brother-officers.

Every word said here on political opposition from the Reichswehr must be understood with the reservation that, withal, discipline and obedience have always been its principal characteristic and will be until the regime degenerates to breaking-point.

With this reservation, the general statement might be ventured that while opposition has been decreasing in the High Command, for reasons of Hitler's growing political success, it has increased among the subalterns, for reasons of their closer contact with the N.C.O.s and men.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yet, even this statement must be qualified by recognition of the fact that, particularly among the subalterns, Hitler could count on an increasing number of genuine Nazis. Indeed, it would seem that to-day there are notable exceptions to a good many things one might say about the Reichswehr. Though this must not be overrated, there is certainly some political significance in the fact that, in the Third Reich, the Reichswehr has lost some of its traditional mental and spiritual uniformity. More about this in the chapter on the present war.

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While an analysis of the political inclinations of the lower ranks obviously does not fall within the subject of the present chapter, a few authenticated reports deserve quotation, inasmuch as they reflect on the mood of officers.

Since the present war will be dealt with in the final chapter, these reports concern the period of imminent danger during the Sudeten crisis:

*Berlin.*— . . . Many of the older reservists, particularly ex-service men of the last war, showed passive resistance. Some of them, whenever we were to be exercised, reported sick; others complained to the officers about the food as well as their outfit. The officers did nothing about it except to send a few of the men home, obviously because they feared their demoralizing influence. . . .

*Cologne.*— . . . When we were lined up to listen in to a broadcast of Göring's speech from the Nuremberg Party Congress one of the reservists shouted: "Shut it up! We've heard that rubbish a hundred times." Several of the men laughed. The N.C.O.s did nothing. . . .

*Frankfort.*— . . . The officers did not interfere when discipline was somewhat slackened . . . even among officers the atmosphere was very downcast; several were overheard to say: if only Hitler gets away with it once more, without war!

*Stuttgart.*—In the course of mobilization week, a number of officers here have been arrested and brought to Dachau. The reason is said to be that they have reported on the bad morale of the soldiers. . . .

Arrests of officers were indeed by no means few, and they grew in numbers as the years went on. Most sensational of all (so far) seems to have been the sudden arrest, late in 1938, of Baron von Forstner, a major in the Air Force and one of the few surviving Flying "Aces" of the last war, a knight of the "Pour le mérite" (the German equivalent of the Victoria Cross) and one of the most popular officers in

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the Army. His arrest (and subsequent sentence) was mainly due to the fact that he had repeatedly expressed his disapproval of the Hitler regime.

But much more significant than the Forstner case was the arrest, in the summer 1939, of Major Henning, of the General Staff, and two Captains of the Regiment *Grossdeutschland*. They were all arrested in Henning's flat, the reason given being "conspiracy in a plot against the security of the State." But the significant point is that this was only the first of a long series of arrests made by a newly-created "Reichswehr Department" of the Gestapo. It should be added, however, that the Head of the Department was (and probably still is) a Reichswehr officer, Colonel von Witzleben.

The mere fact that the creation of such a Gestapo Department was found necessary must surely be a highly significant pointer to the mood of the Reichswehr; yet we must not exaggerate the point and we must bear in mind that however numerous such arrests may have lately become, they still form the merest exception to the rule of strict—even if not always joyful—discipline.

As a matter of fact, in our effort to try to gauge the oppositional mood of the Reichswehr, we will find much more significant pointers in matters less spectacular than arrests by the Gestapo: in general matters such as the Reichswehr's dogged disapproval and obstruction of Nazi ideology and Nazi schooling. The Reichswehr never even tried to conceal the opinion that young men joining straight from Nazi schools must first be purged of most of the ideological rubbish they had been taught, and that to a lesser extent the same applies to any youngster who has been through all the various stages of the "Hitler Youth." The Reichswehr's own military academies are strictly modelled on the old Imperial standard, with no "new-fangled nonsense" of any sort.

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Since practically every young man in Germany has to pass through two years of Reichswehr service, we must not underrate the educational value of that period as an antidote to the ideological food doled out to the youngsters in the Hitler-Youth and Nazi Labour Camps, which precede service in the Army.

Extremely significant seem to be a number of cases corroborated from various sources, of young men reporting for the Army and, when interrogated about their background and schooling, owning somewhat diffidently that in pre-Nazi days they were members of one of the Socialist youth organizations. In each one of these cases the interrogating Reichswehr officer smiled and said: "Good. That's the type of man we want," or words to that effect.

Significant, too, is the Reichswehr's attitude to the Jewish problem, and here I am not so much alluding to numerous individual cases of officers protecting some particularly maltreated Jews, as rather to the Reichswehr's general principle of ignoring, and to a certain extent counter-acting, the regime's anti-semitic activities. There are frequent cases on record of Jewish ex-officers having received most powerful protection from the Reichswehr as a whole.

The Reichswehr had a personal interest in the Nazis' anti-Jewish legislation, because many prominent Reichswehr officers and members of the most aristocratic families happened to be technically Jews, when the strict Nazi code was applied of regarding as a Jew any who had even a single Jewish grandmother. But it became a sort of tacit understanding that the Nazis should not apply this code when the Reichswehr objected. Otherwise, the famous "Nuremberg Laws," with their severe discrimination against Jews, would have been applicable to a good proportion of the German and in particular the Prussian

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aristocracy, including some of the most powerful Junker families. For it so happened that near the turn of the century, in the hey-day of Jewish influence in Germany, inter-marriage between landed gentry and Jewish plutocracy had been particularly frequent, so that when Hitler came to power there were a good many German Counts and Barons (and even a prince or two) who had at least one Jewish aunt in the family. There were quite a few Jewish grandmothers, too, and even mothers.

In almost all such cases, for a long time, the Reichswehr had things very much their own way, by forcing the Nazis discreetly to overlook the "blemish." But in recent years, with Hitler's initial successes in foreign politics and with the more extreme Party leaders to the fore, there were exceptions to the rule, one of the most notable being the treatment of General Hoffman's Jewish widow. General Hoffman—Foch called him the most brilliant German Army leader—was the only unbeaten general of the world-war, and from Tannenberg (where he was the virtual victor) to Brest-Litowsk (where he dictated the peace terms) he ruled supreme on the Eastern Front. Yet his widow, at the time of the November pogroms of 1938, was subjected to the most shocking indignities, and when several personal appeals to Hitler had been rudely brushed aside, the old lady, in desperation, committed suicide. It is not difficult to imagine the bad blood caused by such cases in right-wing circles and particularly in the Reichswehr.

Actually, when trying to assess the oppositional mood of the Reichswehr, we must try to regard Reichswehr officers individually, in their capacity as relations and friends of civilians suffering hardship at the hands of the Nazis, and particularly in their capacity as Christians. Much of what was said in the two Church chapters concerns officers too, nor must it be forgotten that Niemöller is by no means the only

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pastor who happens to be an ex-officer (and a particularly meritorious one), thus enjoying special standing and respect in the Army (and in the Navy to which he happened to belong).

It is comprehensible and significant that Niemöller's Church, so long as he was still at liberty, was not the only one regularly crowded with officers, and since the pastor's arrest and internment Hitler's desk (or wastepaper basket) must be stacked with applications on the pastor's behalf from prominent officers, most notable among them the nonogenarian Marshal von Mackensen whose name in the German Army is almost legendary. It can well be imagined how the rebuff of such a man in such a cause must rankle in the minds of those who respect them both.

Trivial matters are often more symptomatic than the big ones, and this superficial account of the Reichswehr could not be better concluded than with a little story corroborated from at least half a dozen sources, independent of each other.

In a fashionable Berlin restaurant, some time in the spring 1939, two officers rising from their table took leave from each other with a loud *Auf Wiedersehen*. From a nearby table a dashing S.S. leader also rose, approached the officers, clicked his heels and said: "I should like you to remember, gentlemen, that the true German salute is *Heil Hitler*." A pin could have been heard drop when, with every guest and waiter listening, one of the officers screwed his monocle into his eye and replied: "In this country it is customary to say *Auf Wiedersehen* when wishing to see a friend again. I should like to see my comrade again; so I said *Auf Wiedersehen*. But as for you, Sir, I hope never to see you again. Therefore, I beg to take leave of you with a *Heil Hitler*." Saying which he turned on his heel and left the restaurant.



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Petty and irrelevant? Perhaps. But it must not be forgotten that this and similar stories were (and are) whispered around by millions of Germans, and that an abundance of seemingly trivial matters might, in the long run, have more lasting political effect than any half-baked Putsch that fills the front-pages for a couple of days.<sup>1</sup>

"Whispering propaganda" was indeed for long the only means of expression for the right-wing opposition, and it was only latterly that this kind of opposition was properly organized, and then on a wider and more popular basis than that of the old Conservative or *Deutsch-National* Party; to use the convenient and familiar party labels, it might be said that the National Liberals were now included as well as certain sections of the Liberal intelligentsia and some of those Catholics who were formerly adherents of the Centre Party.

The new party took the name *Deutsche Freiheitspartei* ("German Freedom Party") and obviously had to remain strictly "underground" from the start, modelling its organization and its propaganda tactics very much on the now well-established lines of the Socialist Parties<sup>2</sup> who had taken the initiative four or five years earlier, almost immediately upon the Nazis' advent to power.

The German Freedom Party had its own magazine, a monthly called *Das wahre Deutschland* ("True Germany"),

<sup>1</sup> This does not imply that any putsch, half-baked or otherwise, should be expected from the German Army. The Reichswehr is certainly not the putsching kind, and with all its interests in and influence on German internal politics of the last twenty years, it has always been loath to take political initiative and even more so to accept political responsibility. If it was a question of backing some right-wing (preferably Monarchist) counter-revolution, this would, of course, be an entirely different matter, much more after the heart of the Reichswehr officers. While the final chapter will ventilate such a contingency after Hitler's fall, it may be noted here that its chances would be remote—its chances of survival anyway.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 65 *seq.*

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published in London (discontinued since the war); but the Party's main form of written propaganda are the *Deutsche Freiheitsbriefe* ("German freedom letters") circulated within the Reich at more or less regular intervals, generally once or twice a month.

At less regular intervals the Party has had (and still has) its own secret short-wave broadcasts in Germany, not to be confused with the *Deutscher Freiheits-Sender*, which has been operating since early in 1937 and much more regularly. But as radio propaganda will be specially dealt with in a subsequent chapter, we need now only select a few excerpts, as typical as possible, from some of the "German Freedom Letters" available.

During the Sudeten Crisis, a week or two before the Munich Conference, the letter circulated within the Reich contained this passage:

There are among us some who, in the turmoil of these days, look at the threatening war as deliverance from the shame of our servitude. War, so they think, would break the tyranny; war, so they hope, would rid Germany of the Nazi scourge. Such hopes may be comprehensible, may be human, may even be manly—but it is not German, it is not worthy of us. Not merely because a war could destroy Germany and perhaps all Europe—but even more so because we Germans must not look to foreign countries for our salvation, our deliverance from servitude. We are guilty of having admitted the scourge of Nazism—it is up to us to show the determination, the courage and also the strength to break our chains and recover Germany's freedom. . . . We refuse to believe that our Germany can sink for ever into the abyss of Nazism. It is up to us to purge and free our country. . . .

A little later, on the day after the Munich agreement, another letter was circulated voicing the opinion that, far from avoiding the war, the British and French Govern-

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ments had merely given Hitler a new lease of life in which to prepare for another bluff or for a more promising war. The letter continues:

. . . We men of the German Freedom Party are not discouraged; for we have never put our trust in foreign countries. It is up to us Germans to break our own chains; for we are guilty of having subjected ourselves to the unworthy rule of Nazism. . . . Let us get on with our work, dear friends, undismayed. These days of care have revealed the hollowness of Nazism; they must have shown the Nazis that not only have they never conquered the heart of the German people but that they have lost it irrefutably. Let Party-slaves and infants go on cheering the Nazi blusterers and clowns,—the real German, the old ex-service man is disgusted by those irresponsible adventurers who, without rhyme or reason, have dragged our country to the edge of the abyss and who, even now, are about to look out for new adventures. For what irks them more than anything is that our people does not care about all those successes which make them strut about in triumph. The people does not care, because these are not Germany's successes; they are Hitler's own, but it is the German people that will have to foot the bill, once the hour of justice and reason strikes again. . . .

On January 30, 1939, anniversary of the Third Reich, the Freedom Party circulated another letter containing this:

. . . The end is in sight. Too long you Nazis have ravished the German people. Our people may once lose its head, but it will never lose its soul. You could bewilder it for a while through your glittering lies and promises. But now the people has found itself and remembers its honour, its dignity, its duty. . . . Because you are bare of intellect yourselves, you are trying to squash it wherever it shows a bud, you are trying to drag down to your own standards a people which rightfully enjoyed world-wide respect for its achievement in the realms of Art and Science . . . of course you cannot live with Christianity; because it means culture and decency, wisdom and truth—the antithesis

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of all you stand for. . . . What you have done to the Jews will for ever be a blot in the book of the German people's history. It is *we* who are suffering intensely under this shame which you are too coarse and callous even to feel. . . . You boast of your loyalty! Didn't you murder Ernst Röhm and thousands of others who were your own henchmen? Did you keep your word that you would respect and protect the Church? Did you keep the promises you gave the workers, the peasants, the craftsmen, the shopkeepers? What, indeed, have you fulfilled of any of the glittering promises with which you turned the German people's head? . . .

In August 1939, a week or two before the war, the Party circulated a letter which contained this:

. . . The German nation cannot answer as free nations can; for its mouth is gagged, its press are puppets without an opinion or a will of their own. Could we say what we mean, could we do what we want, there would never be a war. For us speaks and acts the man who has usurped power over Germany. What does he say? What does he do? He wants Danzig, and he threatens the Poles, having promised them ten years of friendship. He mocks the democracies and jeers at their statesmen. He keeps on bragging of our military strength and he demands *Lebensraum*. He declines all suggestions, wherever they may come from, to go to a conference table and seek peaceful agreement. He shows the "mailed fist" as his only argument, he trusts in his gambler's luck and his horoscope—and the lives of millions of men, the future of mankind is at stake. . . . Europe, to-day, has one enemy only, the common enemy of us all: National Socialism. Only by rooting out Nazism can we free our own country and save Europe. . . .

Since the war, the Party's main activity has been the circulation of some letters to German officers.

## Nazi Opposition

Under this heading there is no allusion to those thousands of Nazis who, since the advent of the Third Reich, have been murdered or gaoled or dismissed from the Party, or who have a private reason for showing opposition rather than allegiance to their erstwhile leaders. Many of these disillusioned ex-Nazis have transferred their allegiance to one or other of the underground opposition groups, and particularly numerous are the ex-Storm-troopers who have become reliable and efficient members of the active opposition, mostly on the extreme Left.

But the majority of those who have left the Nazi fold seem to have sought no new party affiliation, though all of them might be considered oppositional in temper and a few might venture some individual activity from time to time.

Yet this group alone would not justify a special chapter on the Nazi opposition to the regime if it were not for the fact that from the beginning (even before Hitler's advent to power) there has been an organized opposition of secessionist Nazi groups. These must be described, if for no other reason than historical accuracy.

Ignoring such minor groups as the *Nationalbolschewisten*,<sup>1</sup> we find almost all the more important activities of

<sup>1</sup> This group, led by Ernst Niekisch, was most ruthlessly persecuted by the regime, and after a ludicrous monster trial staged at the turn of 1938, Niekisch (by then a very sick man and almost blind) and many of

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organized anti-Hitler Nazism centred round the name of Strasser. Gregor Strasser, before the Nazis' advent to power, had been one of the most prominent men in the Party, which he in fact led during the period of Hitler's short and comfortable incarceration following the abortive putsch of 1923; while for many years later, when Hitler seldom ventured north of Munich, Gregor Strasser virtually held supreme sway over the Party in Northern Germany. Towards the end of 1932, when the Nazis had either to secure power soon or break up in bankruptcy and ignominy, it was just a possibility that Strasser's star might outshine Hitler's. During von Schleicher's Chancellorship the admission of Strasser rather than Hitler into a reconstructed Cabinet (with the possible inclusion of ex-Chancellor Brüning) was being considered, and Strasser had several interviews with President Hindenburg who, as vouchsafed by witnesses, told him: "I give you my word of honour as a Prussian general that I will never make that Bohemian Corporal<sup>1</sup> German Reich-Chancellor."

Yet, he did, a few months later—after Strasser had been ousted by the furious intrigues of Göring and Göbbels who, rightfully apprehensive that there would be no jobs for them in a Strasser Cabinet, had succeeded in gaining the alliance of that seasoned intriguer von Papen. Göbbels, incidentally, began his Party career as Strasser's secretary, and after at least one unsuccessful intrigue to put his chief in Hitler's place, had changed sides, and erstwhile devoted friendship turned to bitter enmity. As to Göring, he had a reason to hate Strasser: Strasser's aim, if and when his followers were given draconic sentences. Actually, most of these men, despite the vagueness and impracticability of their ideas, were sincere idealists, and all they wanted was the realization of some of the more "socialist" points in the programme of the Nazi Party, whose adherents they had been in its early days.

<sup>1</sup> Old Hindenburg's favourite expression for Hitler.

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he came to power, was to link the War Office and the Air Ministry under Ernst Röhm rather than Göring.

Thus Strasser found himself out in the cold even before the Party came to power, and he lived in sulking retirement for just another fifteen months. During the June purge he was one of those murdered with particular bestiality; he was literally trampled to death by some of Göring's uniformed thugs.

But it was Gregor's brother Otto who put Nazi opposition to Hitler's regime on an organized basis; he started his secessionist group even before the advent to power. Otto, like his brother, had been a Party member since the early twenties, belonging to the extreme "left" group of those who were sincere about the "socialist" shop-window-dressing of the Party programme, and who were progressively disgusted by Hitler's line-up with big industry or anyone else who was prepared to pay his price and trust his promises.

Otto Strasser's final split with Hitler came in 1930, thus jeopardizing his brother's position in the Party, of more importance than his own. Gregor decided, however, to denounce his brother and side with Hitler, who four years later would repay him through the agency of a gang of thugs complete with crowbars and knuckle-dusters.

Otto meanwhile developed his own Nazi Party, which he called *Die schwarze Front* ("The Black Front") and which in 1933, when Hitler came to power, obviously had to go partly underground and partly into exile. Strasser and some of his adherents went to Prague and for a number of years edited there the Party organ, a weekly called *Die deutsche Revolution*. Through its regular contacts with disgruntled Party members within the Reich, this journal was singularly well informed on certain aspects of Nazi politics and, in particular, on the everlasting intrigues within the Party.

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The journal had to discontinue publication even before Hitler's march into Prague forced Strasser to seek another place of exile. He went to Switzerland, where a number of his pamphlets and books have been published, most notable among them *Die Deutsche Bartolomäus-Nacht*, certainly the most authoritative account of the famous purge. Strasser likes to call the Hitler regime the mere "Gironde" of what he is pleased to think of as "the German revolution." He likes also to compare Hitler with Kerenski, the obvious implication being that he, Otto Strasser, is to be the Lenin<sup>1</sup> of the Germany to come.

Strasser has always had a certain secret and fluctuating following of disgruntled Party members within the Reich, those who bore a grudge against the ruling clique, either for such predominantly idealist reasons as might be attributed to Strasser himself, or for more material reasons, vindictiveness, envy, jealousy and frustrated job-hunting. Strasser is an ambitious man and surely hopes to play his part in the upheaval to come. We shall have to look at him once more in the final chapter.

<sup>1</sup> An "anti-Marxist Lenin," of course. Strasser's own form of Nazism can best be described by such of his slogans as "The second revolution on the march" or "Marxism is dead—Socialism alive."



## Student Opposition

*"Intelligence is the nation's useless refuse. . . ."*—HITLER  
in his Reichstag speech of January 30, 1939.

There is not in Germany, nor has there ever been, a political students' party, nor have those sections of academic youth opposed to Hitlerism organized themselves in any separate form. Whatever oppositional activity has so far been recorded from that source was either individual or through one of the existent underground organizations.

Yet a separate chapter on academic youth seems to be indicated; for, considering that these youngsters are to be the engineers, the lawyers and the doctors of the new Germany, it seems more essential to try and gauge their oppositional temper as a whole rather than to record whatever direct oppositional activity has occurred more or less sporadically.

In the long run, obviously, the Universities' attitude to the regime must be regulated by the regime's treatment of universities and learning, and as far as this is concerned, nothing could be more significant than the Hitler quotation at the top of this page. It could be supplemented by thousands of no less authoritative statements; for the Nazis have never even tried to conceal their utter contempt for science and learning. They have turned out many hundreds of the most eminent German scientists and professors, and by no means for reasons of "jewish blood" alone; "political unreliability" was at least as good a reason.

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Many other eminent scholars, writers and artists have left the country of their own free will, in sheer disgust with the regime.

The Nazi authorities have again and again announced and enforced their ruling that any deficiency of knowledge on the part of undergraduates should be overlooked by examining-boards, if compensated by time spent and work done on behalf of the Party, such "work" (by official ruling) to include physical drill, organization of anti-semitic riots, attendance of parades and speeches on Nazi ideology and similar occupations absorbing the little time there is in the none too generous terms scheduled for acquiring the minimum knowledge required by German students.<sup>1</sup>

Within a few years this all led to an admittedly disastrous lowering of the scientific standard universally expected from university graduates, to say nothing of the exceptionally high standard that used to be the rule in Germany. But worse is the incredibly rapid and complete decay of research work in every branch of science, except where it serves, directly or indirectly, military ends. This is not due merely to the exile of so many of the nation's best brains; it is due also to the deliberate withdrawal of facilities and funds once available for research, and by the paralysing atmosphere created throughout the land by the heavy hand of a regime admittedly the deadly enemy of learning and thought, an atmosphere which necessarily stifles at birth every kind of free research and creative idea in any branch of science and art.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The schedules, adequate enough in pre-Nazi Germany, were repeatedly curtailed in the Third Reich, and so were the minimum demands of pre-Nazi examination papers, etc.

<sup>2</sup> It is most remarkable that the few German writers and artists of real ability, who for one reason or another refused to go into exile, either retired into dignified silence or underwent almost unbelievable deterioration. The regime has proved to exert a withering effect on any genuine creative expression.

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It has been said by competent observers that seven decades will not suffice to make up for the ravages done to German learning and arts by seven years of Nazidom. I disagree with that hopeless outlook. With many of my compatriots at home and in exile I hold the opinion that once the criminal scum, the trampling horde of hooligans who have usurped our country, have been chased away, once the land of Goethe, Kant and Beethoven has been rid of the pretentious gibberish of omnipotent imbeciles, once the atmosphere of Germany is free from decreed hatred and persecution, it will not take many years for the German people to recover its prowess in the realm of science and art. The mind of a great people can be numbed but not destroyed, and whatever has happened and still happens, those famous German seats of learning and temples of art are still there and will be there for ever. They may be empty shells just now, but they will once again be filled with life when the spirit is rekindled that gave them birth. Moral credit earned in centuries of hard and conscientious work cannot be squandered in a few years of irresponsibility; nor have a few years of gangster-rule robbed the German people of that industry, thoroughness and creative genius that has produced so many beautiful and useful things in the past. The same qualities will still be there and, properly tended and guided, will continue that work. They are there to-day, even though they are suppressed or numbed or guided into false channels.

As far as the universities are concerned, the withering effect of Nazi rule on the people's urge for education can be easily deduced from the fact that, while in 1931 as many as 73·3 per cent of matriculated boys passed on to a university, by 1937, after four years of Hitler, the figure had fallen to 42·8 per cent, which means that considerably more than half of those eligible for a university education failed to

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avail themselves of it. Even more eloquent is the following revelation of the dwindling number of university undergraduates and technical scholars:

<i>Winter Term</i>		<i>Universities</i>	<i>Technical High Schools</i>
1932-33	..	(combined figure 133,080)	
1933-34	..	79,006	15,764
1934-35	..	65,298	11,791
1935-36	..	57,105	11,447
1936-37	..	49,610	9,373
1937-38	..	46,125	8,172

But it must be borne in mind that in pre-Hitler days German universities were definitely overcrowded, when considered from the practical viewpoint of future accommodation in the academic professions. The growing numbers of what used to be called the "Academic Proletariat" gave cause for serious concern; but in spite of official warnings, the urge for a University education continued to be as strong as ever, even though—to quote just one example—it was the rule rather than the exception for a philology candidate to have to wait for several years after taking a degree before a post could be found for him as a fully-fledged teacher in a public school or even a grammar school.

Under Nazi rule, as revealed by the above-mentioned figures, matters quickly reversed themselves, so much so, in fact, that, to continue the same example, the erstwhile glut of school-teachers had soon become a scarcity of more and more alarming proportions.<sup>1</sup> Exactly the same applies to almost every academic profession; the scarcity (and even more the poor quality) of young doctors has already made itself felt, and the scarcity of lawyers will soon be even more alarming, since in 1938 an influx of a mere 1,158 new law

<sup>1</sup> The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of December 29, 1938, reports a deficiency of four thousand school-teachers and warns that, before long, the shortage would amount to five thousand *annually*.

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students was recorded, whilst in 1939 the figure is said to have sunk below a thousand. Even for such subjects as analytical chemistry (which, in view of its importance to the armaments industry, the Nazi authorities sought to encourage) interest has been steadily waning, and only a few months before the war the official Nazi organ of the Chemical Industry published a bitter complaint about the decrease of students, all the more alarming as shortly the demand for qualified chemists would be about three times greater than the supply.

In such circumstances one ought to assume that undergraduates as a class had little to complain of in the Third Reich; surely not one of them had to share the constant worry of their pre-Nazi predecessors as to when and how he would find work, once he had graduated. Besides, it goes without saying that a good proportion (probably near 50 per cent) of undergraduates in the Third Reich had more or less intimate contacts with the Party and, what with the certainty of good jobs and quick promotion, had every personal reason to welcome and support the regime.

Nevertheless, there has been some form of opposition (or, at least, an oppositional mood) at the universities from the very beginning, and some of it in the very quarters which did enjoy intimate contacts high in the Party hierarchy. I am alluding to the so-called "Corporations," those time-honoured relics of ancient German University tradition which all who have seen "Old Heidelberg" will be able to visualize and which, complete with a duelling code and drinking customs, anomalous rather than quaint, have survived to this day.

Obviously, the students who enrolled in one of these "Corporations" have always been a small minority, if for no other reason than the necessity of a very handsome allowance so as to finance the various uniforms, drinking

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bouts, duels and other old customs rigidly adhered to. Broadly speaking, one might call these Corporations the German equivalent of England's "old school tie," and in point of fact the more exclusive ones (such as the famous Borussia at Bonn University) are expensive clubs where young men are expected to burn their fathers' money and, incidentally, to steel themselves in such manly virtues as being drunk without showing it, and to form social contacts which might be valuable to them in later life.

Strange (or perhaps not so strange) to relate, it was in these circles that, particularly in the early years of the regime, the oppositional mood was quite outspoken, though for snobbish rather than political reasons. As to the more uncouth (and correspondingly socially ambitious) Party demi-Gods, nothing would rouse their wrath more than the open contempt they met with from those young scions of wealth and aristocracy, fearless and mischievous enough to look for trouble where they could certainly find it.

After repeated warnings in the Party Press, matters came to a head when one of those exuberant young gentlemen, having had occasion to meet Adolf Hitler under the roof of his parental mansion, committed an act which could not but be considered as sacrilege: he staged a special evening's entertainment so as to give his friends the benefit of his famous impersonation of the Führer eating asparagus. The result was numerous arrests and the temporary closing of the clubs.

Childish though such peccadilloes might seem, they do have a certain political significance; but they are, of course, more significant of the classes from which those particular undergraduates came than of University students as a whole. The overwhelming majority of German undergraduates have other worries, and most of their opposition to the

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regime (apart from spiritual reasons) is due to annoyance at the inordinate demands of various Party organizations on the time which they would much rather devote to their studies or to whatever private life they still can call their own.

It is no exaggeration to say that about half of the time scheduled for the undergraduate's terms at the University is taken up with Labour Camp, physical drill and perennial Nazi lectures, speeches and parades, and it is understating the case to say that the majority of students have for years been heartily sick of it. Nothing could be more significant than the following admission by Dr. F. Gauwerky, an official Nazi Student Leader:

. . . Passive resistance seems to be the most popular method Undergraduates use to show their disapproval. In the college halls and in private talks they keep on complaining that the daily (and often nightly) drill leaves them not enough time to pursue their studies, to say nothing of their private lives. . . .

In that same official report, the Nazi leader ventures the following remarkable admission:

Undergraduates seem to be shirking Party service wherever they can do it with impunity, . . . and many fail to put in an appearance at official functions. . . . Undergraduates have repeatedly been observed reading newspapers, etc., when supposed to be listening to an official address from a prominent Party leader. In one particular case, the speaker's remark: "I am now coming to the end" was greeted by ironical cheers from the audience. Individual culprits could not be ascertained.

Even though undergraduate opposition has not so far organized itself, many students have joined underground movements; many are taking an active interest in the Church struggle, and others have formed small groups to discuss their own problems, from time to time sending out reports, of which some by various channels have percolated abroad.

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One of these reports, originating in Heidelberg University in the spring of 1939, states that more than half of the undergraduates there hardly try to conceal their opposition to the regime, and that many make a point of shirking official Party functions, even at the risk of enforced failure at their exams.

Another of these secret reports contains this remarkable statement:

Science should serve the truth. The Nazis say it should serve Germany. By this they mean that it should serve the Party; for they say that he who is against the Party is against Germany. They have dragged every scientific ideal into the mire. Over the most brilliant scientist they put the sergeant-major, and they judge a man according to his pedigree and party-ticket rather than his achievement.

As to individual opposition on the part of German (and even more the Austrian) students, a great many cases are on record. I will quote only one: that of two Berlin students who, during the November pogrom of 1938, gave shelter and support to a few particularly maltreated Jews. For this, both these students (although their father, a University Professor, happened to be an old Party member) were "sent down" and thus barred from any academic career, so long as the Nazis remain in power. I do not know what further punishment was meted out to these courageous young men; it is indeed more than likely that, for a simple act of humanity, they are now languishing in a concentration camp. But it is certain that these two young men are very much more typical of German academic youth than the bullies who have vainly tried to kick the humanity out of them. So long as that is so, we need not worry about the future of Germany.



## The Opposition from Women

Overlapping in this chapter of other aspects of German opposition is more inevitable than elsewhere, for obviously there must be a great many women who are opposed to Hitlerism because they are militant Socialists, or devout Catholics, or fervent adherents of the Confessional Church, and what has been said earlier of those bodies must equally apply to these. Yet there are others who hate Hitler simply because they are women, suffering with and fighting for their men. These must have a section to themselves for several reasons, one of which is the fact that the temper of a hundred women who have spent hours vainly waiting for meat, is indubitably a more potent revolutionary force than a stick of dynamite or the most fiery speech of any agitator of any political tint.

But there are more important reasons; for instance, disillusionment. To grasp the full meaning and importance of this, it should be borne in mind to what very considerable extent (at the polls and otherwise) women have helped to put Hitler into power—not one or two or three individual women, but women as a mass, as a sex.

Anyone with a flair for propaganda cannot but admire the extraordinarily shrewd manner in which Hitler and his advisers (notably Göbbels) have succeeded in exploiting the Führer's own personality, and since the political importance of that success (particularly with the women) cannot

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be overrated, we must find space for its analysis, however cursory.

To do so, we must first try to forget the Führer as you and I know him: forget the low brow, the weak chin, the clumsy nose, the Chaplin moustache, the awkward manner, the raucous voice and (for any lover of the German language) the abominably long-winded, ill-constructed, repetitious sentences, bristling with a gibberish of pretentious drivel and half-digested pseudo-knowledge.

Forget all this and take a look at one of those flashy postcards which, with or without Christmas greetings, you find at the more humble provincial stationers: the picture of a smart young man in gentle embrace with a sweet young maiden, some very brightly coloured flowers in the background, a nightingale or two on top, and an appropriate verse at the bottom. Observe the young man's brilliantly coloured features, and in a flash you will see that to millions of people (and particularly women) Adolf Hitler must seem extremely handsome. That moustache is not at all funny; it is smart, not to say dashing. That brow and unruly Napoleonic lock are quite adorable. Those long-winded sentences are in the very style that, in a bogus-salesman's letter to some trusting maiden, would induce her to part with her Post Office Savings book forthwith and cheerfully. That voice is not at all raucous; it is irresistibly persuasive, it is magnetic.

It has certainly proved so, and this again is important enough to require explanation. Strictly speaking, it would be quite wrong to say that Hitler is the world's best orator, though he certainly has been one of the most effective ones. Yet, when applying the normal criterions of oratory, Hitler, though very good, is not a patch on some of the really excellent orators among his own paladins, such as Göbbels. The real cause of Hitler's "magnetic" effect is that he has

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a knack of letting himself go, quite unashamedly, to the point of sheer hysterics. The public are made to feel that he is really working for his money, and it is well known that he would sweat through at least one collar when making a speech of any duration.

In his early days, Hitler would act like this simply because he happened to be that kind of fellow; as he grew from strength to strength he continued a role which he could play all the more easily because it was in his nature, and all the better as his innate shrewdness combined with increasing routine and polish. For many years he has been able, at will, to work himself up into these most effective fits of public hysterics and yet to keep cool enough to work a system of buttons arranged on his rostrum, so as to give precise instructions to the cheer-leaders, the film cameramen and the still-photographer respectively. Hitler, when making a big speech, might well be likened to a wizard, non-existent in the theatrical world, who personally manages all the stage effects superbly and at the same time plays the highly emotional lead.

With that same clever blend of innate qualities and superb showmanship, Hitler's entire private life has been managed from the very start of his career, and that he was a born showman he proved in his earliest days of soap-box and beer-hall fame, when "Putzi" Hanfstaengl and others would introduce him at a few carefully selected houses of Munich society, to get him lionized and to open certain purse-strings. On such occasions, Hitler, dressed in his studiously shabby blue suit and famous mackintosh, would invariably arrive an hour late; then for about half an hour or so he would combine extreme politeness to the ladies (ardent hand-kissing, deep bows and his famous "double handshake") with studied indifference to the point of rudeness, so far as the general company was concerned;

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he would not join in any conversation nor utter one word of "table-talk"; he would maintain a moody, brooding silence which, at a convenient cue in the general conversation, he would break in order to deliver a long harangue on one of his pet subjects; this he would keep up, without allowing a chance to interrupt, for anything between ten minutes and an hour. Then he would suddenly stop and, under the pretext of urgent work, leave the party early and abruptly. Hitler himself has, not without pride, outlined why that "drawing-room technique" of his gave him five-fold attention; firstly, by keeping them waiting; secondly, by unorthodox dress; thirdly, by protracted, silent brooding; fourthly, by his speech; and fifthly, by leaving early, so as to give the company a chance to talk about him, with his speech still fresh in their memories.

Not so bad for a beginner! Yet such early efforts in the art of showmanship were far surpassed by the ingenuity subsequently employed in "presenting" his personality, a composite picture based on genuine qualities (so as to make it easier for him to play the part) and embellished in a manner suitable to establish him as a popular hero.

Look at the real picture and then at the "presented" one, and see how it must appeal to the masses, and particularly to women.

It so happens that Hitler is a non-smoker, prefers vegetarian food and does not care much for drink; nor has he any of the more obviously expensive hobbies, such as yachting, hunting or shooting. He happens to dislike physical exertion and is happiest in the company of a few of his old cronies, swapping anecdotes and old yarns of their mutual careers, chatting Party gossip through the early hours. He also has an inordinate liking for the cinema, and while there are various rumours, which cannot be substantiated, that he seeks erotic release mainly through

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pornographic films, one thing is certain: his sex life, though probably not actively perverted, has never been normal, and the few of his contacts with the other sex that are known were most unhappy. In one case concerning his niece, and at least one other, it was tragic. People who know him well say that he is more or less asexual and seeks emotional release principally through the hysterics of his speech-making. Altogether, surely a case for sympathetic pity rather than condemnation.

Now see how a case for adulation is made of it, even though quite a few elements of truth have been maintained by that clever showmanship presenting a picture like this: with all his well-known love for children, the Führer has denied himself the pleasures of family life, simply because he has no time for it. By day and by night he is concerned with the cares of State and Party, and thoughts of the German people's welfare are for ever uppermost in his mind. So as to cope with the enormous burden of his work and responsibility he lives a Spartan life and denies himself even such harmless indulgences as cigarettes and beer. His one and only relaxation is to spend a day (also invariably crowded with work) in the privacy of the simple little home<sup>1</sup> he has built for himself amidst his beloved mountains. Whenever he can spare a minute he spends it with his loyal comrades or, better still, with the youngest of his beloved people, and he is happiest when patting the fair head of a German boy or giving his kindly smile to a little German girl who hands him a bunch of cornflowers picked by herself.

One must admit that all this is devilishly clever, particu-

<sup>1</sup> In point of fact, Hitler's *Berghof* (near Berchtesgaden) is one of the biggest and most luxurious country-houses in the world, though the pictures published within the Reich are carefully designed to show the "simple" façade only.  $\kappa$

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larly in its appeal to women and in the way a virtue has been made of the necessity of explaining the strange celibacy which might normally rouse a woman's suspicion rather than adulation. In the circumstances (and mainly through its shrewd presentation) it tended to enhance rather than diminish the peculiar sort of chaste, godlike sex-appeal which, at times, Hitler must have represented to millions of German women, to say nothing of his appeal to their mother-instincts.

We have no statistics available on the number of mittens, shawls, gloves, pullovers, etc., knitted by German women on the occasions of Hitler's birthday over a period of, say, the last fifteen years. The fluctuation of these figures (provided they were reliable) would have very considerable political significance; anyway, there has been no mention of an avalanche of presents in recent years, while in the early years of the regime (and a year or two before) the Party Press reported that such tokens of affection from German girls and women came in their hundreds of thousands.

There can be no doubt that at times millions of German women were completely under the spell of Hitler—or, rather, the alluring picture of the Führer, as presented by his shrewd publicity. His appeal, in its essentials, was not very different from that of some particularly popular film star, though, of course, it was stronger and more emotional, creating that peculiar kind of *Schwärmerei* for which "pining" or "yearning" or even "adulation" are most inadequate English translations; for the sentiment expressed in that word is so utterly German as to be untranslatable.

Another vital point to remember if we would understand Hitler's rise to power and his hold upon women is the utter failure, through neglect, of the Republican Governments to appeal to the heart and sentiment of the German people;

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considering that the Germans are probably the most sentimental people in the world, it is quite comprehensible that in a state of emotional starvation, they should have proved easy prey to the rich emotional menu dished up by Hitler, even though the fare subsequently turned out to be mainly *ersatz*.

This analysis of the emotional component of the support given to Hitler's rise by the women of Germany has been made so that we can now try to gauge the extent to which Hitler's anti-climax must be due to disillusionment in the same quarter. Obviously, the very emotional force which helped to build and support the regime must, once reversed, make itself felt equally strongly as an oppositional force.

When dealing with shopkeepers and craftsmen we have seen how, among erstwhile ardent supporters of the regime, disillusionment might be assessed as an oppositional force; very much the same applies to women (even apart from those who happen, in addition, to be the wives and daughters of shopkeepers and craftsmen).

To consider this more closely we must turn from the emotional to the material sphere, even though this too—as usual when dealing with women—has an emotional background.

In their struggle for power the Nazis' main line of propaganda among women was expressed by the slogan "Woman's place is in the home." In the paradise of the Third Reich, no woman, unless she particularly wanted to, would have to work; every girl would find a good Nazi husband with a fine job, and all she would have to do was to make him a nice home and bring up her children (the more the merrier) in loving respect of the Führer.

As a matter of fact, almost immediately upon their rise

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to power, the Nazis made a very shrewd move in granting a great many "marriage loans" each to the value of RM.1,000 (£50), paid in the form of coupons for furniture and household utensils, and repayable to the State in easy instalments, starting after a number of years, and with certain progressively increasing deductions on the advent of children. This was valuable not only as excellent propaganda, nor only as a piece of genuine social welfare; it happened also to suit the Nazi book. For in those early days their main problem was to show "quick results" in what they were pleased to style "the solution of the unemployment problem." To what extent that much vaunted "miracle" was fake, we have seen in an earlier chapter.<sup>1</sup> But in those early days, with the armaments industry still undeveloped, the easiest way to show some "miraculously" quick "improvement" of the unemployment problem was to put a few hundred thousand young men into Labour Camps (where they would not figure in the statistics) and to put another few hundred thousand of the unemployed into jobs vacated by girls who got the marriage loan; for in those days the primary condition of the loan was for the girl to give up employment and concentrate on being a *hausfrau* and mother.

As the years went on that primary condition was reversed into the opposite extreme, and, what with rearmament and autarchy, the Nazis were in steadily growing need of cheap labour. In such circumstances Gobbels' erstwhile slogans were soon forgotten, and the "sanctity of the German home" was a minor consideration when, with utter disregard of where the husband's work might take him, female labour was conscripted or otherwise enforced to a rapidly increasing degree. Up to the middle of 1935, 400,000 female workers were newly employed, to be increased within the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 76 *seq.*



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next year by a further 675,000, and by another 1,200,000, between mid-1936 and mid-1937. And though during the six remaining months of the year 1937 another 1,500,000 women were conscripted, the biggest increase came in 1938 and 1939, when so many extra men were needed for fortification work at the Western frontier and elsewhere, and when women, to an ever-increasing degree, were used for men's jobs in heavy industry and even in mines.

In January 1939, according to insurance statistics, 7.3 million women were employed in Germany. But since these statistics are bound to be incomprehensive, the number at the beginning of the war might well be estimated at 10 millions. In 1933, female employment in Germany amounted to 4.5 millions.

Dr. Syrup, Chief of the Nazi Labour Exchange, has put the matter quite plainly and candidly:<sup>1</sup>

Since I can see no further possibility of intensifying male labour, we have no choice but to exploit and rationalize female labour to the very limit. . . .

Other evidence from Nazi sources is available in the annual reports of the official Trade-Inspectors (*Gewerbeaufsicht-Beamten*); in the last pre-war report (covering 1938) it is openly admitted that female labour is being used in brick-kilns, in heavy industry and in mines, and frequently in poor hygienic conditions; another candid admission in these official reports is the inordinate length of working time which, in some cases, ranges from ten to as much as fifteen and a half hours per day.

Wage scales are far below even the inordinately low wage of the unskilled male worker in the Third Reich. In a Rhineland metal factory, for instance, which is average rather than low, adult women receive 43 pfennigs per hour,

<sup>1</sup> *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 26, 1939.

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and girls under twenty 32 pfennigs. This is what one of these girls' pay envelopes looks like:

			RM.	RM.
Wages for twelve days (96 hours)	..	..	..	39·88
Sick Insurance	..	..	1·31	
• Unemployment Insurance	..	..	1·30	
Health Insurance	..	..	1·20	
			<hr/>	
Deductions	..	..	3·81	3·81
				36·07
				(approx. £1 16s. at par)

With labour conditions like this, one can well imagine that among the millions of women forced to do sweated labour in the Third Reich hatred of the regime must be intense, and since in the higher spheres of female employment conditions are proportionally poor, the numerous admirers of Hitler once to be found in those circles must have lost much of their ardour. Added to this must be the increased drudgery of housework caused by the growing shortage of foodstuffs and the necessity of wasting hours in queues and all sort of petty chicaneries, grievances which, in the long run, have made women the most outspoken accusers of the regime.

One of the greatest grievances of women in the Third Reich is of comparatively recent date; it began in the spring of 1938, when the enormous intensification of fortification work on the Western frontier and elsewhere necessitated the shifting of hundreds of thousands of workers without the slightest regard to their family life. It was not exceptional that a woman should see her husband off to fortification labour, hundreds of miles away, while her grown sons and daughters would be away in the Army

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or in various Labour Camps, and her young children alienated from her (even incited against her) in the various organizations of the "Hitler Youth."

Can we then assess the value of women as a sex in the oppositional forces of Germany, and have they yet given proof of active resistance? We can, and they have. To prevail with naked fists against the machine guns of the Gestapo is, of course, more easily said than done, and in the Third Reich a mere gesture of resistance and defiance needs more than courage. And yet, women, individually and in groups, have dared quite often; perhaps because, once their passions are roused, women have more physical courage than men, perhaps because it was hoped that, confronted with women, the Gestapo's brutality might be restrained.<sup>1</sup>

There are, indeed, innumerable cases on record of how the women of Germany showed open defiance. Some such cases will be reported in a subsequent chapter on the present war, so here, instead of a hundred cases I will quote just one from Berlin at the time of the Sudeten Crisis when, under the pretext of "manœuvres," the Nazis had mobilized an army of a million and a half, to say nothing of hundreds of thousands of men conscripted for fortification labour:

On the platforms and in front of the *Potsdamer Bahnhof* and the *Schlesischer Bahnhof*, on August 15th and 16th, large crowds of women were roused to angry and partly violent demonstrations at the departure of special trains taking conscripted labour to fortification work on the Western and Eastern

<sup>1</sup> A hope which, alas! was very often shattered. Thousands of women have been arrested by the Nazis for political reasons; a great many have been tortured, others have been held as hostages for escaped political prisoners, and almost all of them have been most brutally treated. Details of this grim and shameful aspect are beyond the scope of this book, but the reader will find some notes on the subject in the bibliography and appendix at the end of this volume.

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border respectively. One woman screamed: "We don't want war, we want our husbands back!" On the point of arrest she was covered by the crowd and got away. Finally, through the station loudspeakers, the authorities tried to reassure the women that they would certainly see their men again.

If it were possible to assess in exact terms the oppositional temper of German women, ranging from sullen resentment to white fury, the accumulation would be staggering, and the effect of that force, once it is released, will be far from trifling.

The adulation of German women has certainly had a considerable share in putting Hitler into power; the hatred of German women will have at least as considerable a share in smashing Hitler and the system he stands for.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# The Jews

The reader might be puzzled that, while most of the previous chapter-headings had the prefix "The opposition from . . .," this is missing from the present chapter. The fact is there has been no opposition from the Jews as a whole; not that there are not many Jews who have done and are doing valuable oppositional work, but they took it up either as members of one of the two socialist parties, or as individuals turned militant from sheer hatred of the regime. Into the latter category fall a considerable number of liberal and non-party intellectuals who hate and oppose Nazi persecution, not because, being Jews they happen to belong to one of the groups specially persecuted, but because being Germans (and German intellectuals at that) they are deadly enemies of those who suppress the German people and ravish German culture.

There would therefore be ample material for a chapter headed "opposition from Jews," but nothing for one headed "opposition from the Jews"; for from the Jews as a community there has been no opposition at all. They were, for all the terrible sufferings they had to sustain, no more than an anvil for Hitler's hammer; yet the sparks from the blows ignited a fire of indignation that swept the world.

This indeed explains the curious political role played by the Jews as a community, in spite of (and, to a certain extent, because of) their utter oppositional inactivity as a commu-

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nity. As a matter of fact, the Jewish community has, quite unwittingly, assumed considerable political importance, and the curious part of it is that it has been just as useful to Hitler as to the Opposition.

As far as Hitler is concerned, had there been no Jews in Germany he would have had to invent them; they were vital to him in their perennial role as scapegoats. Not exactly an original idea of Hitler's; many centuries before him Jewish communities were used by the rulers to divert the people's attention from its real troubles, and Hitler, in repeating that age-old trick, has been not nearly as successful with it as most of his predecessors in every land.

The plight of the Jews greatly helped the Opposition by rousing world opinion against Nazi terrorism. Thus coldly to assess the infinite suffering of countless innocent human beings may seem cynical; yet, it must in fairness be admitted that the plight of German Jews, terrible though it is, has captured an inordinate proportion of world publicity, when compared with other far greater and more devastating Nazi crimes.

There is therefore no need here to go into any detail of the cruel hardships and sufferings meted out to hundreds of thousands of Jews during the pogroms and to tens of thousands in the concentration camps; every reader is bound to have heard of them. Yet, in the concentration camps, it must again in fairness be admitted, the cruel lot of the Jewish community was not nearly so cruel as that of the political prisoners.<sup>1</sup> The Jews who, towards the end of 1938, were thrown into the camps by the thousand, knew

<sup>1</sup> These prisoners, of course, included a great many Jews; yet, these were not there as a "Jewish community," but as individuals and politicians who had stood up for their convictions, who had fought the same fight and who were suffering the same fate as their fellow-Germans; often, in fact, an even worse fate on the additional score of being Jews.

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that there was a limit to their suffering; it generally lasted between a few days and a few months, just long enough for their relations to arrange emigration formalities and, more important, to produce enough money to buy their release. It would have to be every penny they could possibly raise, this indeed being the one and only reason for the victim's captivity. It was, so to speak, a case of mass-kidnapping under particularly brutal circumstances and under the auspices of the Government. All this, of course, was for many weeks front-page news throughout the world; while hardly a word was said of the even crueller hardships of a far greater number of men who had been in camp for many years before that short Jewish mass-interlude, and who would have to stay on, many of them knowing that they would never get out alive. But there is, indeed, this much to be said for them that, unlike the others, they had at least the emotional satisfaction of knowing that they were suffering for the cause that was at their hearts.

It was said earlier that, in repeating the age-old trick of making the Jews their scapegoats, the Nazis have been anything but successful; in fact, all their obstinate persistence in vilifying the Jews, all that perennial persecution both ludicrous and fiendish, all the noise and tumult of anti-semitic propaganda, brought forth nothing but angry resentment and sullen obstruction from the overwhelming majority of the German people. When in small towns some new Nazi edict would forbid Jews to shop at all, the grocer and the butcher would sneak into the Jewish houses after dark to provide them with all they needed. When Jewish shops, doctors and lawyers were boycotted, Germans would frequent them out of spite, if not out of kindness. When Jews were hounded out and maltreated, Germans sheltered and protected them. Scores of thousands of such cases are known, and seven years have produced enough evidence

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to state without fear of exaggeration that the German people may even be basically the least anti-semitic in the world. How else, otherwise, could half a million Jews have survived, more or less unmolested, for more than five years, despite the effort of a totalitarian Government systematically to incite the people to rob and murder them on the flimsiest pretext, or to do anything on earth to them, with practical impunity?

It was only when this whole campaign of several years had been of no avail that the Nazis resorted to the abominable pogroms of November 1938, and here again—in fact more so than before—the people's angry reaction to so much Government-inspired hooliganism showed itself in no uncertain manner. Literally thousands of cases are evidenced of how the German people showed its sympathy to the wretched victims, gave them shelter and protection, regardless of the punishment threatened (and carried out) by the Gestapo against all found "guilty" of such selfless devotion.

This chapter should be concluded on a human note even in respect of the young hooligans themselves—the actual perpetrators of those countless acts of vandalism devised by Göbbels and Streicher. Here is a story from one of many similar reports, one for which the author can personally vouch because he knows those concerned:

. . . To our house the "wrecking squad" came at 10 a.m.—three incredibly stupid but otherwise quite amiable young brutes who, with painstaking thoroughness, began to demolish every piece of furniture with the axes they had brought along. After two hours of maddeningly slow and methodical work they had just finished three rooms, less than half of the house. At the stroke of twelve they politely asked if they could use the telephone, and then rang up the local Gestapo Headquarters. It was twelve o'clock, they said; could they come back now, or



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should they go on, and, if so, could they have their lunch hour first? They were told to come back at once. The order was to finish by twelve o'clock sharp. . . .

That is what "the people's spontaneous outburst of fury" looked like in practice; to understand this and many other things about the Nazi regime it is well always to bear in mind that in the Third Reich the control of the country has been obtained by a number of gangsters availing themselves of the services of persons who, normally, should be either in prison or in homes for the mentally deficient.

## Efforts Towards Unity

We have attempted an estimate of the oppositional temper and a survey of oppositional activity in various sections of the German people. We have discovered factors of opposition in every one of these sections which together constitute the entire nation.

But can we record any degree of unity achieved so far? Regrettably, no. Were it otherwise, Hitler would by now have vanished.

And yet, all these sections of the people, though differing in many other respects, have two things in common: a hatred of Hitlerism, and a will to destroy it. Moreover, there have been (and constantly are) efforts to create unity, if only temporarily, so as to achieve that most urgent task, the destruction of the regime.

First efforts for a "United Front" go as far back as the late spring of 1933, almost immediately upon the Nazis' rise to power. At that time it was mainly the Social-Democrats and the Communists who were trying to bury the hatchet. Yet there were many subsequent lapses into former feuds, and although they were generally followed by new and earnest attempts at reconciliation and co-operation, it cannot at the present juncture be said that these two very important parties have by themselves achieved any lasting degree of unity.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact,

<sup>1</sup> Except under direct pressure from the Gestapo which, in the underground struggle as well as among the prisoners of concentration camps, has produced many a concerted action.

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whatever practical and lasting co-operation there has been (and is) between them, is mostly on the wider basis of a really "Popular Front," comprising both Socialist Parties as well as considerable sections of the Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>1</sup>

Efforts for the creation of a nation-wide movement had been proceeding for years, but it was not before 1937 that they bore fruit. Since then that movement has proved its mettle and durability, and it might well be expected to play a decisive part in the things to come. It was in exile (originally in Paris) that the "Popular Front" was born, though contacts with the Opposition at home were immediately established and since then have been maintained and intensified.

The most important and lasting achievement of the movement is the *Deutscher Freiheits-Sender*, the secret short-wave broadcasting station which has ever since the war rightfully earned renown and admiration throughout the world.

The initiative for the organization and maintenance of the *Deutscher Freiheits-Sender* came, early in 1937, from the Communist Party, but when the "Popular Front" became reality a few months later, the Communists put the transmitter exclusively at the new movement's disposal. The *Freiheits-Sender* has striven always to be strictly non-Party, and it has been (and still is) regularly acting as a platform for appeals from Thomas and Heinrich Mann (who, incidentally, was one of the principal protagonists in creating the *Volksfront*), Alfred Kerr, Prince Hubertus Löwenstein and many other German writers and politicians, more or less

<sup>1</sup> But it must be borne in mind that, for the time being, such unity can be considered "nation-wide" only in the sense that it is being practised by innumerable small groups all over the country. Subsequent chapters will elucidate and amplify this point.

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removed from Moscow doctrines. Nothing could better indicate the manner and aims of the Popular Front than the regular introduction that used to<sup>1</sup> precede every nightly broadcast:

This is the German Freedom Station speaking, on or about short-wave 29.8. We stand for all those who are opposed to Nazi terrorism and war-mongering. We stand for all those who are striving for the peace of the world and civic liberties in a truly democratic Germany.

If you should happen to tune in on the closing signal you will hear this defiant shout: "*Auf Wiederhören morgen, trotz Gestapo!*" (You will hear us to-morrow, in spite of the Secret Police).

But to tune in to this station requires a little patience. Often, for minutes on end, the speaker's voice is drowned by the weirdest sounds—like a mixture of catcalls, whistling and machine-gun fire. This is the interference from the powerful Nazi transmitters. Seasoned listeners are prepared for this, and at intervals, so long as he is still audible, the speaker will say:

Should we become inaudible on this wavelength, please try and find us again on one nearby. We shall not be away for more than two or three minutes. We always come back. We are merely dodging Gestapo interference.

And dodge they do. They must have got quite used to it by now, and they dodge with a great deal of virtuosity. And come back they do without fail.

The first ten minutes are generally undisturbed. Even for the Gestapo's efficient radio experts it takes that long to spot the transmitter which is hardly ever exactly on the

<sup>1</sup> Since the war, the slogan has been appropriately changed, and while the old wavelength is occasionally used from ten to eleven, the main address is now from 8.30 to 9.30 on wavelength 40.8.

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same wavelength. After that comes generally the first "catch," and the dodging begins. Quite an exciting game for the listeners. Then, with luck, there may be ten undisturbed minutes, sometimes even more, sometimes much less; in which event some more dodging occurs. The average number of "catches" by the Gestapo is about four or five in the course of the hour. But there is hardly ever less than forty minutes of audible news for the listeners.

The speakers and their technical helpmates risk certain death if the Gestapo should catch them. Yet they continue night after night, to address the millions of Germans, spoon-fed with Góbbels propaganda, eagerly awaiting the Freedom Station with the real news of what is happening in their own country. The penalty for those who listen is also severe. No one in the Third Reich would dare tune in to the *Freiheits-Sender* before carefully shutting every window. Should there be a ring at the door, the German listener will quickly turn to a harmless programme before opening. Failure to do so might well mean a few months in gaol, and a year or two in concentration camp to follow.

There can be no doubt that the existence of the Freedom Station has now been whispered around the entire Reich. A few months before the war the author asked an employé in a factory near Berlin with a staff of 1,200, and it was learned that not only did he and dozens of his colleagues listen each night, but that they regularly passed on the information thus gained to friends who could not listen. Similar evidence comes from hundreds of other sources, and there can be little doubt that the station's regular audience must run into millions, the more so since tens of thousands of workers have succeeded in adjusting their cheap "People's Set"<sup>1</sup> to receive the illegal broadcasts.

<sup>1</sup> The official Nazi set boosted by Gobbels because of its unreceptiveness to most foreign stations.

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There always have been, particularly during the first few weeks of feverish Gestapo activity to trace and destroy the transmitter, the wildest rumours as to the station's whereabouts. One night it was "traced" to Austria (this was before the "Anschluss"), on the next occasion to Czechoslovakia, then again to the U.S.S.R. or Lorraine. Later, the elusive transmitter was "definitely tracked down" to Switzerland, Poland, Belgium and Denmark. In point of fact it has not been in any of these places; it has never been outside the Reich.

The most conclusive proof of the station's presence within Germany are the broadcasts themselves, which often contain information so up-to-date that it could not possibly have found its way so quickly across the frontiers. Moreover the broadcasts since the outbreak of war give conclusive proof of its existence within the Reich.

Even in pre-war days programmes were (as they are still) devoted to those events in Germany which are ignored or distorted by the Nazi Press; to new cases of terrorism by the Nazis, to cases of active or passive resistance by the people. One regular feature "From the Factories" invariably contains inside information of great significance. Take one incident from Floridsdorf<sup>1</sup> reported by the Freedom Station, trifling enough in isolation, yet symptomatic of the mood of the workers and the extent of their daring:

Robert Ley, Nazi Labour Front Leader and Cabinet Minister came to Vienna to address a large meeting of workers on the blessings of Nazidom for Austria, on racial brotherhood and the great achievement "One Reich, One People, One Leader." But he got a lot of heckling, such as: "Where is our promised increase of wages?" and so forth. The Nazi leader, unused to this sort of thing, got thoroughly rattled and shouted: "Any-one discontented can step up to the platform, and I'll give

<sup>1</sup> Viennese working-class district.

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him a free ticket to Moscow!"—"You mean Dachau,<sup>1</sup> don't you?" was the prompt reply. The Gestapo tried to catch the heckler; but no one gave him away.

This little story was broadcast the very same night, just a few hours after it happened, and this is added proof that the transmitter is stationed within the Reich. The truth of the story was subsequently confirmed from several independent sources.

How well-informed the secret broadcasters sometimes are concerning inside news of the Nazi Party can be seen in the fact that the slogan "Greater Germany" of the 1938 Nuremberg Party Congress was announced by the Freedom Station several days before the Propaganda Ministry and the official German News Agencies gave out the information. As a matter of fact, the German underground opposition has many friends in all strata of the Nazi hierarchy, and some of them in the highest ranks.

The Freedom Station is now more or less taken for granted by the population and by the Gestapo, and although the latter have never given up their efforts (feverishly increased since the war) of capturing its personnel and equipment, the chances of their ever succeeding seem now remote.

The transmitter is hardly ever at the same place on consecutive nights; the entire machinery is very cleverly camouflaged and mounted on a truck which is kept almost continuously on the move; its operators are now, of course, highly experienced in covering their tracks and even if the present staff was caught, though it would mean certain death for them, there are others prepared to run the same risk and trained to take over at a moment's notice.

Things were more dangerous in the early days when the

<sup>1</sup> One of the most notorious Nazi concentration camps.

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organization was not running so smoothly and precautions were not so complete as they are now. In those days the Gestapo was particularly active by the special orders of Göbbels, incensed because, night after night, he was personally attacked with the very weapon that his own arsenal lacked: a sense of humour. Night after night the Freedom Station issued a personal challenge to Dr. Gobbels for a regular "duel in the ether." Night after night the secret voice of Germany expounded and refuted certain Nazi theories, and moreover invited Göbbels to come to one of the many microphones at his own disposal and counter argument with argument.

Towards the end of 1938 the Freedom Station staged another "Göbbels-duel," putting forward such precise questions as warmongering, economic conditions, Spain, the Churches, the Jews, and the position of women.

Needless to say no answer was forthcoming nor seriously expected, but throughout those weeks the people's interest was kept aroused. These were the taunts flung across the ether:

We know, Göbbels, how much you like to hear yourself talk, and we do hope you won't miss this opportunity for a "reckoning"—one of your pet expressions, is it not? This time there will indeed be millions of fellow-Germans anxiously eager to hear your answers to the *Freiheits-Sender's* questions and arguments. But this time, of course, you will have to do without the usual pomp, without military bands, without drums and fanfares, without a mighty show of flag-waving and without cheer-leaders either, and we are wondering what kind of a figure you'll cut. Still, you will have plenty of odds in your favour in this duel of ours: for, after all, you have fifty mighty transmitters at your call, and we have just one very modest illegal one, and we'll have to be jolly careful all the time not to be caught by your precious Gestapo; they do have a most simple and effective method, don't you know, of shutting up



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an unwelcome voice; they just have to arrest a fellow, gaol him and murder him, if they happen to feel like it. Well, never mind, we are all set for November 21st—remember that's the date we fixed for you—and we do know there'll be more people than ever, that night, listening in to the *Freiheits-Sender*. Well then Göbbels, don't forget your little date.

Subsequent broadcasts were devoted to analysing each of the seven questions which the Propaganda Minister had failed to answer. Here are a few passages taken down verbatim:

. . . You have forgotten to answer our question why, in the Third Reich, the rich are getting ever richer, and the poor ever poorer. Listen, Propaganda Minister Göbbels: in spite of the fact that, since the advent of the Third Reich, the number of millionaires in Germany has increased by seventeen hundred and twenty (which includes you, Göbbels!), the tax on capital investments has not been raised and death duties have actually been lowered. You know, of course, that the champagne tax has been abolished mainly to please the Ribbentrop family. And you must know that the only taxes more than doubled are those that hit the masses of the population. . . .

This must surely have hit the mark; for few things had caused such universal indignation in Germany as the abolition of the champagne tax, one of the earliest decrees, quite openly "justified" on the grounds that "the German champagne trade happens to be controlled by some of the very best Aryan families well deserving of the nation's gratitude and support."<sup>1</sup>

One of the unanswered questions was that concerning colonies, and for a whole hour the Freedom Station told

<sup>1</sup> To grasp the full meaning of this, the reader should be aware of two facts known to every German: the German champagne trade is almost completely monopolized by the firm of Henkel, and old Henkel is Joachim Ribbentrop's father-in-law.

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the German people some home-truths about Hitler's colonial claims. Here are some passages from this broadcast:

... One of your favourite claims, Göbbels, is that the German people has not enough space to live in. But what about the enormous estates of the Prussian Junkers, with enough space to settle hundreds of thousands of German farmers? Why do you hush up the fact that, during the twenty years before the world war, German colonies absorbed eighteen thousand settlers only, whereas during the same period twenty times as many Germans emigrated to the United States of America. Why not tell the German people that we used to get  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent only of our raw-material imports from our own colonies, an expensive luxury and toy which we could then afford, but not now, with a never-ending scarcity of butter, eggs, pork, clothing, housing—in fact, everything the people really needs. Göbbels, why don't you tell our people the truth: that we could have all these things in plenty if it were not for the fact that all our people's hard work goes to serve the piling up of armaments! Why don't you tell the truth that we would have ample raw materials, plenty of food and adequate housing, the day we could start working for the real needs of the people rather than the profits of the armaments industry. Why don't you tell the people the truth that we could have all the foreign credits we deserve the day Germany were to rejoin the comity of nations, the system of collective security and peaceful international trade. . . .

Another one of those "duel" broadcasts was exclusively devoted to the Jewish problem. This took place a week or two after the nation-wide pogroms staged as a "revenge" for the murder of a German Embassy official by a demented Polish youth. Readers will remember the indignation which swept the civilized world in those November days of 1938, when harmless (and mostly elderly) folk were murdered by the score, gaoled and beaten up by the thousand, when their homes were ransacked and hundreds

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of synagogues were burned to the ground, by order of the Government.

That was the atmosphere in which the broadcast by the German Freedom Station was delivered. These are extracts:

. . . Propaganda Minister Göbbels! You failed to answer our question why, in the sixth year of Nazi rule, the Jews are still to be blamed for everything that goes wrong in the Third Reich. . . . The very fact that, after six years of power, the Third Reich still resorts to pogroms more cruel than any in the darkest Middle Ages—this very fact proves how weak the Nazi regime really is, how utterly rotten and ramshackle.

Just for argument's sake, Göbbels, suppose the Third Reich in six years of unlimited power had really succeeded in fulfilling all those erstwhile Nazi promises. Just suppose for a moment, we had higher wages, reasonable taxation, sufficient food and adequate housing, just suppose the Nazi regime had fulfilled the promise of settling small farmers on the Big Estates, just suppose we had real Social Services instead of faked ones with a lot of ballyhoo, just suppose, in short, the workers, the peasants, the craftsmen, the middle-classes could honestly say "Well, those six years of Nazidom have done us some good,"—we ask you, Göbbels: would you than have staged those Jew pogroms? Would then even the most uncouth simpleton among your Brownshirts have let you incite him to lay hands on a single Jew? The vast majority of our people, Göbbels, sees through all the real motives of your Jew-baiting: to pilfer money and, even more important, to divert the people's hatred from those really responsible for the people's misery. . . .

Propaganda Minister Göbbels, you keep on shouting "The Jews are to blame for everything!" Very well then, what are the Jews to blame for?

Is the Third Reich's Chancellor of the Exchequer, the one who bleeds the people by ever new taxes, is he a Jew? Certainly not. Count Schwerin von Krosigk hails from a Junker family and is an honorary member of the Nazi Party. Or is Dr. Funk a Jew? the Minister of Economics who has his own private

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reasons for looking after the interests and dividends of the big armament concerns.

Or is Hermann Göring by any chance a Jew? He who in a few years has amassed a fortune of millions—the economic dictator responsible for the ruin of hundreds of thousands of German craftsmen and millions of German peasants.

No, not one of them is a Jew. For six years not a single Jew has had the slightest influence in any sphere of German public life. For all the present troubles of the German people none but the Nazi leaders are responsible; they try to shift the blame on those who are least guilty and most defenceless.

But the reaction to the pogroms has clearly shown that the overwhelming majority of the German people did not fall for the Nazi leaders' despicable trick. The German people will not be incited to murder, rape and robbery. Our people is too decent and fair-minded for this! And this your latest crime will only help to foster a new and really genuine popular movement comprising all German men and women who realize that the German people can never be free and happy until it rids itself of its Nazi oppressors.

To prove that such words really represented the innermost feelings of the German people there is abundant evidence. For the German people was even more shocked and disgusted by those November pogroms than was the rest of the world; after all, they had a ring-side view of the horrible spectacle of gangsterism under Government auspices. But, what is more, very many Germans at that time gave practical proof of their real feelings by sheltering and protecting individual Jews wherever they could; this indeed required great courage, and many suffered as a result.

One of the most trenchant and moving of the anti-Göbbels broadcasts was devoted to the position of women in the Third Reich:

... At no time were German women humiliated and exploited as they are now. By the million they are forcibly put to work in

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the armament factories. How does this square with your erst-while talks of "women belonging to the home," Propaganda Minister Göbbels?

In pre-Nazi days women did belong to their homes, so long as they could afford to, and if they wanted a job, at least they could choose it themselves. Now they are being conscripted for men's work at 40-60 per cent lower wages, and if they are wondering why, they have only to look into one of your own papers, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, to find the answer: "We cannot do without industrial female labour because we shall need it in case of war." That's it, Göbbels: your dictatorship forces women to sacrifice their ideals, to sacrifice the free choice of work, to sacrifice personal happiness, to sacrifice everything that makes a woman's life worth living, and all this for the most horrible catastrophe any woman can think of, all this in preparation for war!

The German woman must stint her children of butter because the masters of the Third Reich want more guns for their war.

The German woman cannot give her family a healthy home because the Nazi dictators are interested in barracks and bombing planes rather than housing.

The German woman sees her family life ruined because her menfolk are drafted for fortification labour, the Army and Labour Camps instead of being allowed to work peacefully for the happiness of their families. . . .

And you, Göbbels, you miserable bawler, do you really think you can impress German women with "daggers of honour," shoulder-straps and pistols! Do you really think the relation between man and wife depends on how firmly the man is capable of trampling the floor with military boots!

You, ridiculous dwarf, think to impress German women with "blood-orders," "blood-flags," "Death's-head Storm-troops" and similar rubbish! You haven't an inkling of the real feelings and thoughts of German women! The German mother wants a healthy family; she wants a secure and peaceful future for her children.

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The German mother hates war and loathes your bestial, fiendish dictatorship.

Propaganda Minister Göbbels, whether you do or do not answer our questions, we shall continue. What we have to say expresses the feelings and thoughts of an entire people that has been forbidden to talk!

That latest one of the "Göbbels-duels"—they are repeated at regular intervals—made a great stir throughout the land. Needless to say, the Propaganda Chief's only answer was to order an intensified search for the courageous broadcasters and more ruthless interference with their voices in the ether.

The volume and incisiveness of the interference varies to an amazing degree. Comparatively harmless reports and comments have quite frequently been "jammed" so effectively as to be practically inaudible, whereas much important information and really dangerous revelations have got across almost freely. This might, of course, be pure coincidence, as it seems rather improbable (though by no means impossible) that the Freedom Station's many secret friends should extend to the very ranks of those supposed to defeat them.<sup>1</sup>

The simplest explanation seems to be that the Gestapo's "radio-jammers," being but ordinary mortals, are alternately eager or indolent at their work and that sometimes they may even be sufficiently interested in the Opposition's voice to listen to it rather than to smother it.

Anyway it is strange that in those critical days of September 1938, when war seemed imminent, the Freedom Station had hardly any interference to contend with, in spite of its being more outspoken than ever, openly inciting the people to sabotage. A little later, with Czechoslovakia

<sup>1</sup> No one, to my knowledge, is "planted" there, as so many are in other Nazi organizations, particularly among the Storm-troopers.

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thrown to the wolves and Hitler triumphant, so that the Opposition could do nothing but cry over spilt milk, the station was more severely and efficiently interfered with than ever. The first few programmes of October were, in fact, practically inaudible.

A week or two later still, things got back to the normal 20 per cent interference. But perhaps the anomaly just mentioned is not so very strange after all, but just one more proof that bullies are ruthless in triumph and cowards in adversity.

In a subsequent chapter more will be said of the German Freedom Station, when inspecting its very considerable efforts during the present war (as well as the activity of a bogus "Freedom Station" which has made its appearance since the war).

## The Nazi Reply to Opposition

Having surveyed whatever oppositional temper and activity has come into evidence in various sections of the German people, we must try to estimate what the Nazis do to cope with it, and what the German opposition is up against.

There can, of course, be no more convincing evidence of the severity of the regime than the ever-increasing number of concentration camps, the hundreds of thousands gaoled with or without a trial, the tens of thousands murdered one way or another. Some very grim statistics the reader will find in an appendix to this book. On the other hand, the Nazis' boast of having 99 per cent of the population body and soul behind them cannot be more crushingly disproved than by a mere glance at the enormous man-power and machinery which the Nazi leaders consider necessary to control the activities of what they allege to be but 1 per cent of the population.

Nevertheless, it is true that they need every ounce of that enormous power, and they are, of necessity, constantly increasing it.

To this effect we could have no more authoritative evidence than the word of Himmler, Chief of the Gestapo and holding Cabinet rank in the Third Reich.

In September 1937<sup>1</sup> Himmler addressed a select audience

<sup>1</sup> Since the basic principles of administration still follow the lines laid down in the document, this is by no means out-of-date, except in minor details which will be duly discussed.



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of Reichswehr officers; the lecture was considered so important that copies were circulated to all ranks upwards of the colonels. One copy was smuggled across the frontier, and on that document the following summary is based.

The complete text of this momentous address runs to some fifteen thousand words of the Gestapo Chief's inimitably dry and factual style. For considerations of space we will have to content ourselves with a summary. These are the significant points:

We must have more concentration camps. The Führer has given me unrestricted powers to arrest anyone I consider suspect. . . .

In a future war we will have to deal not merely with the front of the Army on land, the front of the Navy at sea, and the front of the Air Force in the air, *we will have a fourth battle-field (Kriegsschauplatz) to look after: Inner Germany!*

At the beginning of the war, mass arrests on an unprecedented scale will be necessary . . . the majority of political prisoners will have to be shot out of hand. . . .

. . . The entire country must be occupied by a minimum of thirty Death's-head divisions (*Totenkopf-Sturmbänne*).<sup>1</sup>

No unit is ever to be used in its home-district; I will never allow a Pomeranian Regiment to serve in Pomerania. Moreover, every unit is to be moved to another district every third week. . . .

None of these units is to be wasted on ordinary police duties, nor must any man with the skull-and-crossbones badge ever patrol a street alone. That will never do. These men must appear in units only. . . .

Once the emergency arises, utter ruthlessness is essential. Anything less than that is quite out of the question. . . .

<sup>1</sup> A skull-and-crossbones badge is (most fittingly) worn on the caps of some of Himmler's S.S. Guards.

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### *Summary of the Himmler Document*

Himmler opens with a short historical account of the S.S. Guards<sup>1</sup> which were originally established in 1923, even before the ill-fated "Beer-hall Putsch," when they were dissolved, later to be re-established in a small way and, in 1929, to be reorganized on a gigantic scale under Himmler's command.

This reorganization, so Himmler explains at some length, he approached from the view-point of his National-Socialist *weltanschauung*<sup>2</sup>; thus, in selecting what was to be the élite of Nazi manpower, he let himself be guided primarily by racial principles, by "good nordic blood." After quoting Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Professor Günther on racial theory, Himmler painstakingly elaborates his difficulties in making the proper selection. The only valid test of a man's worth and valour, he says, is war, and while in those days (1929) he still could pick some of the elder men on the strength of their war-records, he had no such practical test with regard to the younger men who were to form the rank and file of the new corps.

<sup>1</sup> It is not quite clear whether the "S.S." abbreviation originally stood for *Schutz Staffel* ("Protective Detachment") or *Saalschutz* ("Hall Protectors"), in view of their principal task in early days of throwing out the hecklers and other undesirables from the beer-halls in which at that time the Party meetings were invariably held. However, from the start the swaggering, top-booted, black-uniformed S.S. were intended as a *corps d'élite* to supply the Führer and other Nazi leaders with bodyguards. They were distinguished from the more uncouth and then much more numerous S.A. This latter abbreviation stood for *Sturm Abteilung* ("Storm Troops") or alternatively *Sport Abteilung* ("Sports Troops")<sup>1</sup> whenever the Nazi leaders wished to explain away these too alarmingly military organizations. In the "blood purge" of June 1934 it was exclusively on the S.S. that the Führer relied for bumping off hundreds of the others, notably S.A. leaders.

<sup>2</sup> One of the German language's ugliest and most abused words; its meaning—if any—might be rendered by "ideology" or "general outlook."

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So he had to go mainly by their looks, says Himmler, and adds:

In the first place, I demanded a certain height. I took no man under six foot, because I know that persons that tall must somehow have the desirably good blood.

He qualifies this statement by adding that, while there may be cases of racial purity among smaller men, the probability of error must be reduced by restricting the choice to men above a certain height. He then adds the further qualification that height alone does not necessarily guarantee racial quality. Facial expression and general demeanour are equally important; therefore he took the trouble personally to inspect the photo of each applicant before allowing him to appear before the Recruiting Commission.

At considerable length, Himmler then goes into the details of his ideal bodily type, particularly as to marching efficiency, etc. In giving further details as to his selection methods he mentions a preference for the well-to-do; and whether they could or could not afford it, he deliberately over-taxed the resources and generosity of the candidates by demanding specially high contributions to Party funds and by insisting that they supply their own rather expensive uniform, top-boots and all. Himmler adds:

If the man would not do this or said he couldn't afford it, we would tell him: You had better go; somehow you haven't grasped the thing, somehow<sup>1</sup> you have not that supreme readiness for sacrifice; we have no use for you. That was how, by and by, we got to the blood we desired.

In continuing his survey, Himmler reaches the year 1933, when the Nazis secured power and when the now "fashion-

<sup>1</sup> "Somehow" (*irgendwie*) seems to be Himmler's favourite word. I counted more than a dozen per thousand words.



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able" Elite Corps had a considerable influx from the ranks of the upper-middle classes. Many of those seem to have proved unreliable from the Nazi standpoint; for between 1933 and 1935 Himmler says he had to dismiss more than sixty thousand of them.

After the historical survey, Himmler gives a precise account of the organization of the S.S. Corps. There is, firstly, the *Allgemeine S.S.* ("General" S.S.), which at the time of the lecture numbered close on two hundred thousand.<sup>1</sup> These men retain their civilian occupations but have to give practically all their spare time, including Sundays, to S.S. duty, such as general exercise, special training, and so on. Only their leaders above the rank of *Sturmabannführer* (about the equivalent of Captain) are in the service as a whole-time paid job. Apart from (a) the general S.S., there is:

- (b) the *Verfügungstruppe* (Special Bodyguards),
- (c) the *Totenkopfverbände* (Death's-head units),
- (d) the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Intelligence Service, Police, Gestapo),
- (e) the *Rasse und Siedlungswesen* (Racial and Settlement Dept.).

The general S.S. (*Allgemeine S.S.*) is organized in a number of *Oberabschnitte* (main parts) corresponding exactly to the number and districts of the Reichswehr's Army Corps;<sup>2</sup> each is divided into a number of *Abschnitte*, corresponding to Army Divisions; each of these in turn is divided into a number of *Standarten*, corresponding to a regiment and numbering sixteen hundred men. The *Standarte* is

<sup>1</sup> More than doubled by now.

<sup>2</sup> There were thirteen at the time of the lecture; but there were at least four more up to the war, and a considerable further increase has been reported since.

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divided into *Sturmabteilungen*, *Stürme* and *Züge*, the latter (corresponding to a company of the Army) comprising anything between fifty and one hundred men, whilst a *Sturmabteilung* roughly corresponds to a battalion.

To qualify for the S.S., a man must have spent his boyhood in the *Hitler-Jugend* ("Hitler Youth"), membership of which has now for some time been compulsory for every boy; at the age of eighteen, he can enter the *Schutzstaffel* and is known as a *Bewerber* (aspirant); after three months he takes the oath to the Führer, and for the next year he is called *Anwärter* (candidate). Next he has to serve his year in a Labour Camp, and then his two years in the Reichswehr. On the November 9th following his release from the Army, the man becomes a fully-fledged S.S. man; he is presented with the *Ehrendolch* (dagger of honour), and he must solemnly swear to defend his honour according to the S.S. code and to obey the S.S. matrimony rules, which means that he must not marry unless his prospective bride has been examined and passed by the S.S. Racial Department.

To his thirty-fifth year the S.S. man must devote every free minute to S.S. duty or training, most of it physical, though Himmler has this to add:

Along with physical exercise we must have some mental and ideological exercise. Once each week we have a schooling evening, when historical subjects are dealt with and a few pages from *Mein Kampf* are read aloud. The older the men get, the more secure they must become in their *Weltanschauung* and the more we teach them of it. . . .

Proceeding, Himmler gives details of the *Verfügungstruppe*, which consists of the following units:

(a) S.S. *Standarte Adolf Hitler*, consisting of three motorized battalions and several additional companies;

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(b) S.S. *Standarte Deutschland*, consisting of four battalions, a motor-cycle company and some artillery;

(c) S.S. *Standarte Germania*, similarly composed;

(d) S.S. *Sturmabteilung Nürnberg*, consisting of one infantry battalion;

(e) S.S. *Pioniersturmbattalion*, an Engineering Corps centralized in Dresden;

(f) S.S. *Nachrichtenturmabteilung* (Intelligence Service).

In all these units service is full-time and lasts four years.

Then Himmler deals with the *Totenkopfverbände* (Death's-head units) which are exclusively used for guarding concentration camps.

Whilst the statistical data he gives are now very much dated,<sup>1</sup> Himmler stresses at great length the necessity for considerably increasing the number of camps and their inmates as well as the duration of their detention, all of which has meanwhile been fulfilled.

This is what he told the Reichswehr officers of the conditions and treatment of the prisoners:

The camps are surrounded by electrically charged barbed wire. Obviously, if a man enters a forbidden zone or otherwise trespasses, we shoot; if he leaves work or seems to make even the slightest attempt to escape, we shoot. If a man is impertinent or obstructive—and that happens quite frequently—he either gets solitary confinement in a completely darkened cell and on an exclusive bread-and-water diet, or—and now, don't be shocked, gentlemen, I have merely revived an ancient Prussian prison regulation—he gets up to twenty-five strokes with the cat. . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Latest official figures in the appendix.

<sup>2</sup> We have no space to do justice to innumerable feats of heroism shown by the stoic sufferers of such brutalities, oppositional activity, refusal to sign parole-forms, to vote for Hitler or to give the Nazi salute even when Himmler's gangs of torturers literally had the whip-hand over their political prisoners.

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Himmler then made the statement already mentioned that, in case of war, it will be necessary to kill certain prisoners,<sup>1</sup> re-arrest others, etc. After observing that the Death's-head units, "which, needless to say, are plentifully armed with machine guns," are signed on for four years full-time service, Himmler adds:

In case of war, those Death's-head units are to form the nucleus of the considerably larger force we shall need to guarantee internal security and full control of the people.

After promising to revert to this important subject before the end of the lecture, he turns to the fourth group of his realm, the *Sicherheitsdienst*; this is what he calls "the Party's and, moreover, the entire State's great ideological Intelligence and News Service."

Himmler then explains why, years before the Party came to power, they found it expedient to separate that kind of service from the ordinary routine of the Storm-troopers and other Party organizations; because the rank and file was under no circumstances allowed, let alone encouraged, to talk politics or even to think independently; he adds:

From the very beginning this was our guiding principle in the S.S.: Problems of the day do not interest us; any leader appointed by the Führer is accepted by us and blindly obeyed; any leader deposed by the Führer is removed by us, if need be by force. Only the Führer's word is law. As to ideological (*weltanschauliche*) problems—we are merely interested so far as they concern decades and centuries to come, and indeed our men can feel well detached from the ordinary rut emotionally, inasmuch as they know they are serving a task of the kind that happens only once every two thousand years. But when it comes to everyday questions, such as whether in such and such a district the right man is or is not in the right job, or whether,

<sup>1</sup> Since then this has to a considerable extent been done, mostly in the first and second month of the war.

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say, in the Labour Front Administration everything really is as it ought to be, when it comes to this, well, the S.S. man simply is not interested, whatever happens, he is just not interested!!

After this scarcely veiled hint at the colossal graft in Dr. Ley's "Labour Front,"<sup>1</sup> Himmler proceeds to give details of the *Sicherheitsdienst*, which comprises his famous and dreaded Gestapo, the extent of which can be gauged from the fact that Himmler mentions as many as four thousand "leading positions" within the organization.<sup>2</sup>

Going into the details of the Gestapo's sphere of activity Himmler enumerates six Departments, each of which specializes in controlling and suppressing the oppositional group assigned to it. He mentions these groups in this order: Socialists, Jews, Freemasons, the Catholic Church, the Confessional Pastors, Conservatives and National Liberals of the old school.

Then, deploring the widespread theory that Austrians and South Germans are different from Prussians (a theory on which this strange historian blames the loss, seven or eight hundred years ago, of Switzerland from the ancient German Reich), Himmler adds:

Which German professors are supporting theories like this or are somehow, directly or indirectly, influenced by certain wire-pullers abroad? that is the sort of thing we are interested in. . . . We are interested in the Comintern's plans for the immediate future: what kind of influence does Bolshevism exercise on the Freemasons abroad? what kind of wires are being pulled there? where are the big Bolshevik emissaries particularly active? what are their immediate plans in Germany?

<sup>1</sup> See p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Since then (late in 1937) the organization has been enormously intensified as well as extended, and it should now have close on ten thousand officers and a proportionally numerous rank and file and clerical staff.



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how are they linked up with our Confessional Church? what are the Jews, here and abroad, up to, with a view to undermining our economic strength and robbing us of foreign currency? etc. That's the sort of thing we are interested in and studying as thoroughly as the Army's General Staff studies its own problems. . . .

Before reaching the most important and significant part of his lecture, the summing-up, Himmler deals with the fifth group of his organization, the "Racial Department," which has the task "to see to the ideological schooling of the S.S. and to deal with marriage applications." Every S.S. man has to prove his "pure Aryan descent" as far back as 1750, and this, of course, necessitates an enormous genealogical department with a staff of hundreds of "experts" fully occupied in hunting up old church registers, etc., to say nothing of the clerical staff necessary to attend to hundreds of thousands of files.<sup>1</sup> Any S.S. man wishing to marry has to apply to the department and introduce his prospective bride and her ancestral record for approval; should permission be withheld, he must look for another bride.

After considerable detail on all this (particularly on the breeding aspect), Himmler concludes this subject with a somewhat megalomaniac eulogy of Germanic predominance throughout the ages:

Germany is much more eternal than Rome which, after all, is only two thousand years old; but we Germans have known the plough as long as five thousand years, and as to the most ancient letters known to humanity, they were invented by none other than our Germanic ancestors.

<sup>1</sup> By making this kind of "work," the Nazis have, to no small degree, contributed to their famous "miracle" of solving the unemployment problem! See also p. 76 *seq.*

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After this historical excursion, Himmler returns to a subject in which he is better versed: the policing of the Third Reich.

He stresses the necessity for an efficient police force to go to the very limit of ruthlessness, and he sneers at the police of the Republic, handicapped by all sorts of "stupidly sentimental post-war ideas like prison reform," to say nothing of "meddling organizations," such as the "*Ligue pour la défense des droits de l'homme*." Then he gives a short historical account of how, in the first years of the Nazi regime, "the police was licked into shape," first by Göring and finally by himself.

Having stressed the importance of the police for A.R.P., in time of war, he comes to his momentous statement (as quoted above) on the "Front No. 4: Battlefield Inner-Germany":

Unless we can manage, by hook or by crook, to keep that fourth one in check, the three other fronts, those fighting by land, by sea and in the air, will once again get the dagger's thrust in the back!<sup>1</sup>

Himmler's next thousand words are devoted to the customary Nazi tirade against the bolshevist-jewish-freemasonic influence of sub-men striving to disintegrate and then destroy the white man as represented by the pure German Nordic. After repeating his charge of a "world-conspiracy" against Germany, Himmler continues:

And that brings me back to what I said earlier regarding the racial question. We Germans are more valuable than the others, even though they will always outnumber us. We are more valuable because we have better blood and because, by dint of that better blood we are better leaders, better soldiers, better statesmen, we have higher culture, better characters and altogether better quality. . . .

<sup>1</sup> This is an allusion to the famous "dagger-thrust legend." See pp. 20 *seq.*

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Then he again reverts to his main problem of the "Home Front" in wartime:

This problem we must face under any circumstances, and we must have no illusions about the fact that any war in which we would neglect the internal battle-ground (*Kriegsschauplatz im Innern*) would lead to catastrophe.

This is his practical solution of the problem. He realizes that, with a police force running into hundreds of thousands, he must in time of war give the army a considerable proportion of those of military age; but he insists on the necessity of keeping in the country a nucleus force of men between twenty-five and thirty-five ("I want them neither younger nor older"), specially trained and ideologically suitable for ruthless action against the Opposition. For this nucleus he requires a minimum of thirty *Sturmbänne* (each corresponding to a full regiment) of his Death's-head units, at that time exclusively occupied in guarding concentration camps. As to their present service, Himmler added, this could in an emergency be taken over by older men, nor could there be any doubt that thousands of the more dangerous political prisoners would have to be shot anyway on the first day of war, partly to eliminate any possible danger of revolt, partly to economize in food and guards.

After devoting a few paragraphs to the necessity, in wartime, of mobilizing women for A.R.P. and other duties, ("if for no other reason than to keep them busy and stop them from gossiping and grumbling"), Himmler sums up as follows:

It is absolutely essential for you, gentlemen of the Army, as well as for everyone in a responsible position, to understand the vital importance of that Internal Battlefield, which in case of war will amount to a question of life or death for us. To solve this problem and to solve it ruthlessly, is the order the Führer

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has given me, and for carrying it out he has given me unlimited powers. . . . One thing should be quite clear to all of us: the next decade will not bring us some mere simple conflict in Foreign Politics which might or might not turn out successfully; no, this will mean neither more nor less than a life or death struggle against the sub-humans of the entire world, who are striving to destroy Germany as the kernel of the Nordic race and the cultural leader of mankind. This will mean "to be or not to be" for the white man whose leader-people we are.

In his final sentence, Himmler avers that he and his audience are fortunate to live at a time when an Adolf Hitler has been born to lead them, which occurs but once in a couple of thousand years.

Even though this lecture was delivered and circulated two years before the beginning of the war, it is to-day even more relevant; for, with all the basic principles maintained, much of what was then merely a plan has since materialized.

The S.S. has been more than doubled and even better organized; the Gestapo has been extended as well as intensified, and Himmler's favourite Death's-head units have been multiplied many times over, if only in order to keep up with the ever-growing number of concentration camps. At the time of his lecture, Himmler gives the total number of those in concentration camps as eight thousand, adding at once:

But we must have more, we must have many more, and the Führer has given me unrestricted powers to arrest anyone I consider suspect.

Shortly before the war there were as many as eight thousand persons in Dachau alone, and more than twelve thousand in Buchenwald, to say nothing of Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg and dozens of other camps. Sometimes, in the last

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year before the war, as many as four or five new camps were put up in one single week, and dozens were added in the newly conquered territories of Austria and Czechoslovakia, so as to give Himmler's favourite Skull-and-cross-bones units a further opportunity to train for their allotted task in the present war: to act as gaolers for the entire people.

How the gaolers as well as the gaoled have stood up to that task we will try to examine in the final chapter.

## Part Three

### HISTORICAL SURVEY



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# The First Five Years

Since anything even approaching a complete history of the opposition to Nazism would require a small library, all we can attempt in this historical section is to trace the general line and to record the milestones on the weary road of seven years' length, to see how these events have retarded or advanced the approach to the main goal: the destruction of the regime.

In the first few years the principal milestone in internal politics was undoubtedly the "blood-purge" of June 30, 1934. But before we turn to this, it would be well to ask ourselves whether and to what extent the major events in Nazi foreign politics influenced the progress of the opposition; whether such events as the retirement from the League of Nations, the denunciation of Locarno and the reoccupation of the Rhineland, the "*Anschluss*" of Austria and Sudetenland, and the occupation of Prague and Memel, succeeded in making the people forget their troubles at home. Was the pride of foreign conquest sufficient to counterbalance the repression and privation the German people had suffered? This much can be stated categorically: the more spectacularly the Nazis triumphed abroad, the more trouble they encountered within the Reich. Nothing indeed could be more significant of the real mood of the German people than its growing apathy toward



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uncoveted triumphs which it felt would lead to inevitable doom.<sup>1</sup>

This applies particularly to the more recent events; as to earlier triumphs, such as the Saar Plebiscite and the reoccupation of the Rhineland, these were of course popular, in so far as they righted a real national grievance. The Austrian "*Anschluss*" was to a certain extent popular also, though it would have been more genuinely so if it had not been brutally enforced.

Enforced?—the reader might well ask. Was there not a plebiscite? Was there not a majority of 98 per cent or more in favour of the "*Anschluss*"?

It had to be a 98·8 per cent majority, for the previous plebiscite had shown a result in the neighbourhood of 97 per cent, and a "totalitarian" state must never go back on earlier laurels. It may not even secure a triumph equally good. It must always go "one better," go forward or perish—and this, indeed, is why it must perish soon.

In this "*Anschluss*" plebiscite, the Nazis were shrewd enough to repeat the trick that they played on almost every similar occasion: they linked a specific question, which every good German patriot could not but answer in the affirmative, with a general question involving approval of the regime. It did not matter much if a conscientious voter split the two questions, answering one affirmatively and the other negatively.<sup>2</sup> Such a vote would be counted as a full "yes."

Nazi plebiscite technique being very typical of the whole regime, it would be well to devote some space to its description.

<sup>1</sup> The Nazi regime may well be likened to the progress of the German Army in the World War when, long before Ludendorff's final assault, one perspicacious German officer remarked: *Wir werden uns noch zu Tode siegen!* (We're so victorious we'll catch our death of it!).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the case (one of many) described on pp. 132-33.

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Hitler had early promised to "go to the people" every year and show the world how wholeheartedly he had the nation behind him; but he preferred not to risk this and, as we have just seen, he decided to couple such plebiscites as there were with a specific issue of genuinely nation-wide appeal. Naturally, he could easily have staged a "plebiscite" or an "election" at any time and on any issue, with the certainty of achieving exactly the desired result; for he had three never failing resources at his disposal—a propaganda campaign, as *kolossal* as Göbbels knew how, intimidation of the voters to the point of sheer terrorism, and (if need be) direct falsification of voting results.

As to propaganda, what with the Nazis' natural flair for it and the unlimited resources at their disposal, it was magnificent: no hoarding without its poster, no newspaper, cinema nor radio programme that did not blare forth the appropriate slogans for weeks on end. But apart from such legitimate means, every public or private body, association, union or club was used for electioneering on the grandest scale. Any reader who has once seen a newsreel of any big Nazi event can easily imagine it all. But it might be more to the point to quote an authenticated story, one of many.

Into a grocer's shop, in a small town in Southern Germany, a neighbour came to shop and chat. "Well," he said to the grocer's wife, "I see you've got your election poster up." "Of course I have," said the woman, "we'd be fined five marks if we hadn't." "Shut up, you silly ass," her husband threatened from the background, "don't you know it's *verboten* to talk about it."

It might be added that shopkeepers were charged anything between threepence and sixpence for the posters they were forced to exhibit.

As to intimidation, the Nazis had a wide range of resources. The main method was the total or partial

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elimination of that principle of secrecy which, being basic to any truly democratic election, has been "officially" maintained for the farcical "elections" and "plebiscites" of the Third Reich, even though it has been virtually nonexistent.

In the Republic, even in Imperial Germany, every polling-station had to maintain a curtained booth into which each voter had to go to fill in his paper and seal it himself in the envelope. It was unlawful for a voter to mark his paper in public, even if he wished to do so. In this the Nazis, while maintaining all or most of the traditional paraphernalia, made a decisive change. Occasionally (particularly in country districts) they did without the booth altogether, and the voter had to mark his paper under the very eyes of the Storm-troopers present. But this was exceptional; as a rule the booth was there, as before, but (an important qualification that influenced millions of votes) people were not expected to use it—it simply "wasn't done." In such circumstances any voter who did insist on his constitutional right to mark his paper in the privacy of the booth would make himself most suspect, to say the least. Considering further that each polling-station was crammed with menacingly exuberant Storm-troopers, it can be readily imagined what effect such "new customs" would have on the result. In the big cities, with the possibility of foreign journalists watching, the traditional polling rules were more strictly observed; but here a more subtle yet none the less effective form of intimidation prevailed: word was spread that the Nazi polling officer had mysterious means of peeping into the booth. Frequently the side curtains were actually missing, but even where this was not so the voters were haunted by the fear that it would be easy to distinguish the opposition voters by stacking envelopes in the order in which they were delivered and checking with the list in

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which voters might be entered in order of appearance. Whether or not such rumours were based on fact, the psychological effect was the same and must have accounted for millions of votes.

Quite frequently, intimidation went to the extent of sheer terrorism, even against those who merely wished to abstain from voting. In many towns the custom was introduced of handing special badges to those who had been to the polls, and as the day drew to a close the hunt would be raised for the badgeless. From many similar cases I will just quote one of a woman in the small town of Völklingen (in the Saar-Palatinate). Having refused to vote in one of Hitler's periodical "plebiscites," that woman was dragged through the streets by boisterous Storm-troopers; meanwhile she shouted continuously "My Führer is Christ." She was dragged to the polling station, forced to mark her vote for Hitler, and then thrown into a lunatic asylum (but not for that last reason!).

Another case of abstention from voting concerns Pastor Friedrich and his wife in Aurich, a small town in North-Western Germany, on the occasion of the "*Anschluss*" plebiscite; they were both arrested for failing to vote and for having been heard (or alleged) to say that "it was a pity Austria should be incorporated in the Third Reich."

Cases of actual punishment for opposition-voting are many, and one of those reported is from Friedlingen on Danube, where the Nazi polling-officer, resenting the three "No" votes which blemished his record, was suspicious of three peasants known to be outspokenly anti-Nazi. The three men were arrested and most brutally maltreated. In that case, the Nazi clearly wanted a pretext for venting his spite against those three men; as far as concerns the "blemish" on his district's record he could have made that good by a stroke of his pen. Direct falsifi-

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cation of voting results was actually quite usual, when there was no other means of reaching whatever figure (generally somewhere between 97 and 99 per cent) Göbbels may have selected. Rather typical of many similar authenticated cases is one reported from a district where as many as forty-one "No" votes were declared invalid because the cross (obviously made in a hurry) was not neatly within the circle provided.

From the masses of evidence available on the forging of results, I will just quote a few cases typical of so very many:

Out of some 1,000 votes passed in a certain Hamburg district, there were 600 "Yes," 180 "No," and the remainder blank. The result recorded was some 820 "Yes" and 180 "invalid."

While such faking was quite regular,<sup>1</sup> the following report is even more typical:

In three polling stations at Barmbeck (Hamburg suburb), Rothenburgsort and Röhrendamm, out of a total of twelve hundred votes it was alleged there was not a single "No"; but we know for certain that hundreds of voting papers had been either marked "No" or left blank or defaced.

Finally, an amusing case from a little town in Saxony:

The local polling manager, particularly eager to show a good record, sent down as early as three o'clock a complete list of some six hundred "Yes" votes, with not a single absentee. Half an hour later there ambled along a belated voter, a harmless citizen who had slept till lunch (this being a Sunday) and who was now quite ready to cast his vote for Hitler. The manager was most embarrassed, and although there was still some hours before the close of polling, he had to send the man away, telling him that it was over.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also p. 154.

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It was necessary to describe these plebiscites at some length, lest readers brought up to respect the ordinary decencies of parliamentary tradition might be confused by the farce made of them by Göbbels.

### *The Blood Purge*

The "blood purge" of June 30, 1934, we have already described as the first milestone in the internal politics of the regime; it has been repeatedly mentioned in this book, and we can confine ourselves to the barest outline of the actual facts, because it is now an item of general knowledge.

Apart from S.A.-Chief Ernst Röhm and ex-Chancellor Kurt von Schleicher, the two most prominent victims, Hitler had officially admitted to some seventy others; in point of fact, considerably more than one thousand have since been identified, and the probability is that the death-roll of that famous *Bartholomäus-Nacht* is close on two thousand. With Göring supreme in Berlin and clubbing his victims to death in their homes and offices, or dragging them to the Lichtenfelde Military Academy for court-martial by the hundred—Hitler made his swoop in Munich, taking fearful toll among what used to be (and to a large extent still was) his most loyal following. A great many of those who died had not the faintest idea why they were being executed. Several died with "*Heil Hitler*" on their lips, thinking there was an anti-Hitler plot and that they were dying for their Führer. Throughout the Reich, during that day or two of "free-for-all-murders," hundreds of private scores were settled among the higher ranks of the hierarchy. It was a case of "shoot first" or, with those too big to stain their own hands, a question of who could first command the most ruthless gang of killers. Quite a few were shot "in error," and perhaps the most tragic and yet most ludicrous of all cases is that of a perfectly harmless

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musical critic by the name of Willy Schmidt, a man who had never even thought of politics but who was dragged away from his dinner-table, pushed into a lorry and shot within the hour, with no explanation asked or given. A week later, the widow and her four children received a tidy little urn containing the ashes of their bread-winner, and a covering note to the effect that Herr W. Schmidt had been mistaken for a namesake, a "wanted" S.A. leader. After yet another week, an official of the Chancellery called on the widow "to express apologies for the regrettable error as well as the Führer's personal condolences." By that time the Third Reich had become again an *Ordnungsstaat*, and the Führer personally saw to it that all murders were properly legalized *post festum*.

What was its meaning? Who was plotting against whom? Who was the victor, who the vanquished? If it was a plot of Röhm and other S.A. leaders, why Schleicher? Why so many other aristocrats? Why those half-dozen or so of prominent Catholics? Had not von Papen the narrowest of escapes? And Göbbels himself, did he not save his own life merely by keeping out of reach of his arch-foe Göring and byclinging to the Führer like a leech throughout that fateful night and day?

If any plotting was done, of course Göbbels had had a finger in that pie; in fact, he had been intriguing with Röhm till a week or two before the latter's death; yet he had been nimble enough to nip back to the other side while the nipping was good. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Röhm had been actually planning a *putsch* to overthrow the Führer on that fateful June night; all he was really planning that night was a hearty carousal with a bevy of handsome boys, and it was in this very act that a number of them were shot, so giving to Göbbels and Hitler the occasion for a most moral speech on the disgusting

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sink of depravity they had been pained to behold (as if for fifteen years they had not known all there was to be known about Röhm's little hobbies). But even more eloquence was used to emphasize how the Führer, "by a lightning stroke in the nick of time" (a typical Hitler touch) had saved the country from unspeakable chaos and terrible catastrophe.

The small element of truth in this melodramatic story is the fact that Hitler quite likely did nip in the bud what might ultimately have developed into a plot, and as a matter of fact, while there seems to be no sense,<sup>1</sup> let alone a link, in the long and variegated list of those murdered, there surely might have been (even if not yet) some "link" between such of the more prominent victims as Röhm, von Schleicher and Gregor Strasser. It has been said (and it is probably true) that these three, for many months before their death, had not even met, let alone engaged in mutual plots. Yet it is not unfeasible that before long they might have become protagonists of some rebel movement within or without the Party. Something like it was "in the air," and the mere existence of Röhm's overgrown "army" of three million S.A., and his own constant clamouring for the War Office, worried the Reichswehr; for the Reichswehr wanted neither the S.A. incorporated in the Army nor Röhm in charge of the War Ministry. Moreover, the Junkers and Industrialists were worried about the "leftist" tendencies, within or without the Party. As to Hitler, he had been pressed from both sides, and he had to come to a decision, one way or the other. As usual, he had been wavering for some time, and the very fact that so shrewd an opportunist as Göbbels had been flirting with the

<sup>1</sup> Except the desire to use such unique opportunity for getting rid of as many undesirables and enemies as possible, and to settle some "private scores."



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other side until almost the last minute, proves how open the issue was until Hitler finally decided to side with the big guns and money-bags.

Can we therefore say that the Reichswehr, the Junkers and the Industrialists were the victors of June 30th? To a certain extent we can (even though they had to mourn a great many victims from their own ranks). But the real victor was Hitler. He had weathered the first severe crisis of his regime; he had, in no uncertain manner, re-established his own power, and thus paved the way for its greater solidification a few weeks later when the death of old Hindenburg elevated him to the post of "Führer." Surely, the very imminence of the old man's demise precipitated the "purge"; it was felt that the issues at stake had to be settled, one way or the other, before the problem of the succession raised yet another crisis.

What was the effect of the June events on the Opposition?—not the Church opposition,<sup>1</sup> nor that of the peasants and lower-middle classes which, at that time, was only just about to come into being, but the organized underground opposition of the workers. Did they gain or lose from the repercussions of June 30th? On the whole, they should be considered the losers: not so much because of the crushing of whatever "leftist" movement might have ultimately developed from Röhm, Strasser (and possibly Schleicher), for the workers had nothing to gain from such quarters, but rather because Hitler had ramified and solidified his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 147 for what little direct bearing the "purge" had on certain aspects of the Church struggle. Generally speaking, the world-wide disgust caused at those events did tend to engender confusion in all strata of the population and to increase antipathy to the regime, though tempered by admiration of the successful destruction of what was presented as a "sink of depravity" as well as a danger to the State. Gobbels' propaganda very cleverly played up the Führer's stern justice as being, regardless of his own feelings, particularly ruthless against those who had once been dearest and nearest to him.

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position, and this they soon felt in the shape of intensified suppression and persecution.

But they gained a little as compensation: the purge could not but create discontentment within the Nazi party, some Nazis becoming a valuable addition to the ranks of the opposition.

From the purge to the next event of real importance (the Austrian "*Anschluss*") there were nearly four years, for the Opposition a period of many ups and downs, not relevant enough for closer inspection here.<sup>1</sup> The opposition from the Churches in that particular period has already been described in previous chapters. In the underground workers' opposition (and that of the peasants) that period produced only one move of really outstanding and lasting importance: the materialization of the slogan "*Hinein in die Nazi Organisationen*" ("Get within the Nazi organizations").

From 1935 onwards, very slowly at first and then to a steadily increasing extent, such "Trojan Horse tactics" have been followed, and significant is the realization by the opposition leaders that, while isolated efforts might be spectacular enough but would stand no lasting chance, the certainty of ultimate success could be achieved merely by painstaking care, infinite patience, hard work and systematic plodding. It was not until 1938, and particularly in the months immediately preceding the war, that such labour began to bear real fruit. Subsequent chapters will show how such results were achieved.

<sup>1</sup> Those ups and downs had often a barometer-like dependence on Nazi foreign politics; when these were checked, such as on May 21st during the Sudeten crisis, and even more so during the first two years of the Spanish war, the Opposition gained heart, while every Nazi success meant disappointment and set-back. Yet, we cannot possibly overrate the heartening effect on the German Opposition of the Spanish people's brave and persistent resistance.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# Austria

*"To educate Austrians to be true Nazis will prove a far more difficult task than the actual achievement of the Anschluss. . . ."*—

From a speech by Nazi-leader Dr. HABL

The Nazi sigh here recorded was voiced in an address on August 25, 1938, to Nazi factory leaders in the Steyr Motor Works. The task mentioned has meanwhile proved to be not merely difficult but impossible.

It was on March 12, 1938, that Hitler swooped on Austria; but the spade-work in the grave of Austrian independence was begun more than four years earlier, when Dollfuss brought artillery to bear on the workers of Vienna, and when Schuschnigg, his successor, continued a wavering policy midway between a mild home-brand of semi-fascism and half-hearted resistance to the real thing originating across the frontier. This resistance was alternately sheepish and courageous, but always dignified.

How insignificant a hold Nazism really had on the Austrian people can be gauged from the fact that, in spite of the dissension in the enemy camp (i.e. the Government, the workers and the intellectuals), and with all the enormous support received from the Reich, in pre-*"Anschluss"* days they could never count on more than a quarter of the people as their supporters. When the *"Anschluss"* did come, none had more cause for disillusionment than those early Austrian Nazis who had been trying to prepare the ground for their

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Führer: none of them received or kept the big jobs they had expected, many were arrested at the slightest sign of disobedience to the "imported" Party-comrades set above them. When they had grievances to air they had to resort to illegal leaflets; here is a passage from one of them:

They are trying to eliminate us altogether. They are trying to crush us old fighters with their Gestapo. Why? Because we are feeling the shameful indignity of being treated as a conquered province. . . . But we won't let them cheat us. We can now see quite clearly what they want: not Austria's "*Anschluss*,"<sup>1</sup> but Austria's subjugation to Prussian rule.

They were somewhat late to see it. But we have here neither space nor need for details of the history of Austria's rape: how the first efforts failed; how then the ground was prepared; how Schuschnigg was finally tricked; the march into Vienna; the first few days of terror and hysteria, pogrom and ballyhoo. All this has been described enough to be considered common knowledge. All we can attempt here is to find what active resistance has been engendered, how it was provoked and to what extent it has been noticeable in various strata of the Austrian people and how it has influenced opposition within the Reich.

We have already seen how, even in the very ranks of Austrian Nazis, opposition was engendered by disillusionment, jealousy and resentment, coupled with wounded pride and some genuine patriotism. Pride and patriotism caused even more resentment and some active opposition in Conservative circles and in the Army. Considering that of 1,200 Austrian officers only 300 were recognized at first by the Nazis and allowed to retain their rank, considering

<sup>1</sup> By now accepted in international terminology, this word, in its original German meaning, implies the element of *voluntariness* in joining someone or something. Thus, when alluding to Hitler's rape of Austria, one should never fail to give the word *Anschluss* its due ironical quotes.

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further that the majority of them were transferred to the Reich and frequently treated with open suspicion and studied condescension and discourtesy, it can well be imagined how wounded pride and an innate hatred of "Prussianism" combined to engender an oppositional mood in these quarters. There are dozens of cases on record of popular Austrian officers secretly apologizing to their troops for the vindictiveness and uncouth manners of the particularly brutal Sergeant-Majors sent by the Nazis to put the fear of God and some real drill into them. "You lazy Austrian pigs" was one of the more civil terms employed in addressing people rightly famed for their sensibility as well as their easy-going ways and natural charm.

Since Austria is very predominantly Catholic (and devoutly so in the country districts), the most acute question, when the Nazis swooped on Austria, was how would they treat the Church and how would the Church react. But by that time the Church struggle in the Reich itself had been going on for five years, and time and again Austrian Church leaders, in particular their senior Cardinal Innitzer, had expressed their contempt of Nazi methods in no uncertain manner. How would they react to such brutal attacks on their own position and persons? Would they suffer martyrdom to hold up the Cross in defence of their Faith and liberties, or would they wilt and yield? It indeed seemed at first as if they would yield, as if at least their leaders were prepared to choose the course of compromise at any price; and surprise and dismay was felt by Catholics throughout the world, and by all freedom-loving people, when, during the very first days after the "*Anschluss*," Cardinal Innitzer went out of his way to profess devotion and loyalty to Nazidom, and actually wrote in his own hand the words "*Heil Hitler*" to the typescript of one such declaration.

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Here surely was the Nazis' chance to achieve their long-standing dream of an "Away-from-Rome" movement in the Catholic Church of Germany, a movement somehow conforming to their own "German Christians" in the Evangelical Church. Yet they spoiled the chance by their own intransigence, and even the "Nazi-Cardinal" (Innitzer) was soon driven back into the fold. A few months later, in October 1938, his own house was looted by an officially organized gang of Nazi hooligans; windows were smashed, furniture and books hacked to pieces and, worst of all, a young priest, one of the Cardinal's secretaries, when trying to remonstrate with the crowd, was seized by a few Storm-troopers and literally thrown from a second-floor window. The young priest died from the injuries received, but not one of the hooligans was punished; many of them had been "imported" from the Reich.

This outrage was but one of innumerable similar ones in keeping with this much-quoted public utterance of an eminent Nazi authority, the Gauleiter of Graz, Kollik:

The Jews are like lice, and no human feeling need be wasted upon them. As to the Catholics, they might be called black lice.

More significant is the rapid and drastic way that the Nazis tried to secure a hold on Austrian youth. Tens of thousands of boys were forcibly enrolled in the *Hitler-Jugend*, and an official guide for schooling them in Nazi ideology was painstakingly planned. It is a document containing fifty "theses."<sup>1</sup> I will quote only a few of them:

Christianity is Communism.

Christianity puts Negroes and Whites on the same footing.

The New Testament is a Jewish twist of four evangelists.

<sup>1</sup> The very use—rather rare in modern German—of the word *These* obviously signifies that the authors were hoping to emulate (at least in outward appearance) Martin Luther's famous "theses" nailed to the door of the church at Wittenberg.

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Then she was taken to face the Nazi prison chief again, and only after she had loudly said "One Reichsmark equals one-and-a-half schillings" was she dismissed with a stern warning.

Shortage of space excluding any detailed analysis, I propose a very much abridged chronological survey of the salient points on the oppression of the Austrian people and their resistance, skipping the first few days of mass-arrests, shootings, pogroms and looting.

*March 17th.*—A Nazi, Vitzthum, a notorious terrorist and murderer, was appointed Vice-President of Vienna police. Professor Nobel, the famous gynaecologist (aged seventy-two), and his wife head the long list of suicides.

*March 21st.*—Sixty more suicides in Vienna. The Nazis admit 1,742 arrests to date, adding that this does not include socialist party functionaries.

*March 27th.*—Jewish suicides are estimated officially at an average of one hundred per day.

*March 30th.*—The Dollfuss statue in the Chancellery replaced by a statue of his murderers.

*April 1st.*—The Nazis are forced to issue a ban on new membership of their party in Austria, due to the enormous influx of oppositional elements in compliance with recent oppositional tactics within the Reich.<sup>1</sup>

*April 11th.*—General Zehner, former Secretary of State, and Professor Knöpfelmacher, the famous Vienna child specialist, are among the suicides.

*April 22nd.*—A new wave of persecution against prominent Austrian officers and judges. The number of dismissed Jewish employees is estimated at eighty thousand.

*May 7th.*—Austrian Nazis issue their first illegal leaflet against their oppressors from the Reich.

*May 9th.*—Two Gestapo officials are murdered on their return from a house search. Terrible retaliation.

*May 15th.*—Vienna's Nazi Chief of Police issues a threatening

<sup>1</sup> See p. 300 *seq.*

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edict to the shopkeepers. Unrest grows over increased food prices due to the new, unfavourable Schilling-Reichsmark rate.

*May 17th.*—Austrian Catholics are barred from visiting the Budapest Eucharistic Congress.

*May 20th.*—The Hitler salute is enforced in Austrian schools.

*May 27th.*—Demonstrations of the unemployed in Vienna and St. Pölten. Himmler pays a personal visit to intensify Gestapo activities.

*May 28th.*—In the Wimpassing rubber factory women workers stage an unsuccessful strike. . . . The Styrian convent of St. Lambrecht seized by the Nazis.

*May 31st.*—Many arrests in the Vienna Infantry Regiment No. 3 for refusal to go to the Reich.

*June 4th.*—In the woods, near Vienna, a secret meeting of Oppositionists is raided by Gestapo. There are forty arrests.

*June 7th.*—Fifteen hundred Storm-troopers (S.A. and S.S.) are arrested by Gestapo. Fifty Austrian Nazis are taken to Bavarian concentration camps. One of the Austrian Nazis' illegal leaflets contains this passage: "We did not fight for years so that we could now act as porters and see all higher posts occupied by Prussians and other strangers."

*June 25th.*—A delegation of Austrian Nazis goes to Berlin to ask for the dismissal of Governor Bürkel. Hitler declines to receive them.

*July 3rd.*—Demonstrations in the three main Vienna markets. Twice the *Brunnenmarkt* has to be cleared by police.

*July 5th.*—The Vienna edition of the Nazi *Völkischer Beobachter* admits food scarcity and describes as "high treason" the "food-hoarding of the Vienna population."

*July 13th.*—The S.S. leader Peschke is shot by rebellious Viennese S.A. men. . . . In the Vienna Gas Works at Leopoldau excited protest demonstrations take place against new wage deductions.

*July 19th.*—Mass trials (in Klagenfurt, Innsbruck and Leoben) against Austrian ex Government officials who had punished Nazis after the Dollfuss murder of 1934. Gaol sentences up to five years are imposed.



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*July 20th.*—The number of suicides (in Vienna alone) has passed the seven thousand level.

*July 25th.*—Official honours are given to the Dollfuss murderers. Deputy-Führer Hess delivers the celebrational speech.

*July 30th.*—The Capucin and Franciscan convents in Salzburg are closed by the Nazis.

*August 1st.*—A Nazi meeting in Vienna's 21st district (*Donaustadt*) leads to blows. Workers are beaten with riding-whips. Many arrests.

*August 5th.*—After a demonstration over the insufficient quantities of goods allotted them, eighty-six Viennese market-stall-holders are sent to Dachau concentration camp.

*August 10th.*—Mass arrests of soldiers in five Viennese barracks,<sup>1</sup> where illegal leaflets had been found with this conclusion: "There is night over Austria to-day. But the sun will rise again. Long live Austria!"

*August 20th.*—Forty-two Austrian Social-Democrats are arrested.

*August 22nd.*—A new Göring decree introduces a sixty-hour week in the armaments industry, and later in the building trade and in agriculture.

*August 31st.*—Twenty-five Viennese shopkeepers face trial for contravention of price regulations.

*September 2nd.*—The *Völkischer Beobachter* announces officially that, as from the 19th, all Catholic schools (including the famous *Schotten-Gymnasium*) are to be closed.

*September 5th.*—The ancient German Crown (of the Holy Roman Empire) is taken from Vienna and brought to Nuremberg. . . . A Pastoral letter condemning various Nazi crimes against the Church is read from every Austrian pulpit.

*September 8th.*—Many Catholics are arrested, particularly Youth leaders, such as Scheffel and Maly, Chief of the Catholic Boy Scouts.

*September 10th.*—All that remained of important Austrian

<sup>1</sup> Principal arrests were made in the *Rossauer-Kaserne* (160), in the *Wilhelmkaserne* (120) and in the *Train-Kaserne* (about 50).

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banking interests is taken over by Krupp and other Nazi representatives. . . . Nazi Labour Front takes over the biggest Austrian insurance concern.

*September 23rd.*—Official Nazi statistics (*Deutscher Volkswirt*) report a 50 per cent decrease in Austrian exports as against pre-Anschluss days.

This takes us as far as "crisis-week," immediately preceding the Munich agreement. Throughout that week there were anti-war demonstrations in Vienna, particularly by women. The German General Staff declared that in case of war the whole of Austria would have to be occupied by the Reichswehr. In Floridsdorf (a Vienna working-class district) the metal workers struck for a day or two, and in the provinces acts of sabotage were reported from a number of armament works.

While the more recent developments in Austria (and their repercussions in the Reich) will form the subject of subsequent chapters, we must now see how the German people as a whole, and the active opposition in particular, reacted to events in Austria during the first few months after the "*Anschluss*."

There can be no doubt that at first (and, in fact, many years before the advent of the Nazis) the idea of the Anschluss was extremely popular, and if it was not that Nazi gangsterism had brought it into existence, that union, had it been allowed to materialize as the really voluntary union of two closely related nations, would have been welcomed as useful and beneficent to both nations in a great many ways. Hitler was not slow to avail himself of the inherent popularity of the Anschluss-idea, and when the plebiscite after the event was staged a considerable percentage of the Yes-votes was indubitably genuine, even among those who strongly disapproved of Germany's temporary regime. But when the grim details of the enforced Anschluss began to

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percolate, that staggering sum-total of cruel persecution and human misery certainly served to create and increase a hatred of the regime, and the active opposition gained new impetus from the added resistance engendered in the conquered province.

Personal contacts were established partly by the "Strength through Joy" trips<sup>1</sup> and even more through the tens of thousands of Austrian workers brought into the Reich for forced labour, mostly on fortification work. There were as many as twenty thousand of these, according to Nazi figures, in the one month of July 1938; hundreds of them walked or hitch-hiked home, undeterred by the threat that having left their work without permission they could never again receive unemployment relief within the "Greater Germany." Many said they would starve rather than suffer the hardships and indignities they were exposed to on fortification labour.

Subsequent chapters will show to what extent oppositional activity was fostered by that forced labour on fortifications, "forced" in both meanings of the word.

<sup>1</sup> These trips to and from Austria, organized by the Nazi "Labour Front" (see pp. 73-74) to publicize the regime, were soon discontinued when it was discovered that the German "revellers" in Vienna were causing added resentment or learning about new atrocities, whilst the Austrian visitors to the Reich were learning contempt rather than admiration of the regime. Two hundred of those Austrian "Strength through Joy" trippers, in fact, were gaoled for "disrespectful remarks on Führer and Reich."

## Munich

We have already seen how, by its own inexorable dynamics, Nazism was constantly driven in search of new conquest and power, or to put it in a more material form, how growing unrest and opposition within the Reich spurred the regime's efforts for a series of spectacular successes in the foreign field. Reciprocally, it might be said that Hitler, once embarked upon *Machtpolitik*, had to pay for each of his triumphs abroad by growing unrest and opposition within the Reich. This had two causes: growing fear of war, resulting from the appalling risks Hitler faced with each new *coup*, and the ever-growing armament and fortification which forced increasing sacrifices from the people.

May 21, 1938, may be regarded as a landmark in that sequence of events: on that day the mobilization of the Czech army put a temporary stoppage to the first stage of Hitler's bid for a bloodless *coup* in Sudetenland; he was at that time by no means ready for war and his bluff had been called.

Almost immediately upon this serious check to his ambition, Hitler began the construction at break-neck speed of the western fortifications, commonly called the "Siegfried Line." The very speed and pressure of the work inevitably led to serious dislocation and discontent throughout the Reich, the more so as, concurrent with the building

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of frontier-fortifications, the strategic motor-roads, planned and in construction for years, had to be completed under similar stress and with equally ruthless exploitation of the nation's manpower. To illustrate the average conditions of that work, I will quote only one of many similar documents available—a letter from a Vienna chauffeur who, like so many of his compatriots, had been dragged away from his own land, from his own family and livelihood, to join in that forced labour:

... We live in barracks, eighteen men in one room. We have to do heavy work for eleven hours a day. We rise at 4.30. There's an hour's march to work, which begins at six. First break from 9.30 to 10 a.m., the second from 1 to 1.30 p.m. Then we slave till six o'clock and it's gone seven before we are back in barracks. At eight o'clock we get our grub, not too good either, and then we simply fall into bed, we're that tired. This goes on day after day. We feel like machines rather than human beings. Wages are 53 pfennigs<sup>1</sup> an hour. If I'm lucky and it doesn't rain, that means if I have done my sixty-six hours, I can manage to send the missus eleven to fourteen marks. And with this she must make do for rent and the two kids.

As that summer of 1938 progressed Hitler, it will be remembered, chose the pretext of "manœuvres" to stage the greatest and longest mobilization ever attempted in peace time. As that summer drew to its close and the Sudeten crisis to its climax, he had more than one and a half million men under arms, added to which were more than half a million men employed on fortification and road labour. Such general and protracted dislocation necessarily created nation-wide unrest, while throughout the summer and autumn the crisis was methodically driven to its climax to the shrill accompaniment of Göbbels' venomous propaganda against the Czechs, puzzling and irritating and

<sup>1</sup> About 6d. at par.

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worrying, rather than exciting, for the overwhelming majority of the German people.

Very significant of the people's mood at that time is this authentic report:

On the much-frequented road from Düsseldorf to Krefeld, Gestapo men were hurriedly doing an overtime job. As they splashed paint over huge letters on a high wall, ten thousand workers from the huge near-by Rhein-Metall armaments plant lingered delightedly on their way to work. For on the wall, in indelible paint, was the slogan: *Down with Hitler. He is heading for war. We want peace.* It took more than one coat of paint to obscure it, and talk in the works afterwards indicated that the message had achieved its immediate purpose.

A similar case (one of many) was reported from the Saar district, very near the frontier:

The slogan *Hitler is the warmonger* was scrawled in enormous letters right across the road between the mining villages of Geislauntern and Kleinrosseln. It had been seen by thousands of miners before the Gestapo heard of it. Before it was obliterated the Gestapo photographed every letter; but although handwriting tests were subsequently taken of dozens of suspects, the culprit was never discovered.

From the biggest German dockyard of Blohm & Voss came a leaflet which was subsequently circulated throughout Hamburg; here are a few of its lines:

. . . We do not want war. We, the overwhelming majority of the men at Blohm & Voss merely voice what the whole of Hamburg is thinking: we warn Hitler and his warmongers not to provoke war against Czechoslovakia. We warn them not to ignore the will of our people.

When towards the end of September the Sudeten crisis was reaching its climax, it is true to say that the German people was in a frenzy, not of jingcist "patriotism" (let

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alone hatred of the Czechs) but of utter bewilderment and abject fear. When the Munich agreement was signed, the majority of the people felt neither glory nor triumph but simply relief at being rid of the nightmare of imminent war. But a great many Germans, and practically all the active opposition (of all parties), were disconsolate that Hitler had been presented with this cheap triumph. They were convinced that the Munich agreement, far from having saved the peace, had made the war almost inevitable. They were, and still are, no less convinced that Hitler, had his bluff been called, could never have gone to war over so unpopular an issue and against such an overwhelming grouping of powers as he might then have had to face, apart from the military problem raised by the powerful Czech frontier fortifications.

However that might have been, this fact remains beyond doubt: the week before Munich, with the workers keyed up to sabotage and revolt, the women desperate to the point of hysteria, the churches crowded for intercession services despite the Gestapo, with tears and curses at the departure of every troop-train, and fear and unrest rampant through the Reich,—that week marked the highest tide of opposition to date. The week subsequent to Munich marked a very severe setback for the Opposition and, incidentally, the highest point ever reached by Hitler.

It is remarkable that after this amazing triumph the regime failed to "settle down" even for a few months; it simply could not. The regime went forward like one spurred by the Furies. Hardly had a week passed after the Munich triumph when Hitler threw out a challenge to those who fondled the pious hope that the "spirit of Munich" would prevail; that was in the speech at Saarbrücken. Then, only a few weeks later, came the Jewish pogroms, that most disgusting show yet of publicly organized

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sadism. Surely, if ever the metaphor of the bull in the china-shop held good, it did so in the way the Nazis handled the delicate fabric of peace and goodwill which Munich was supposed to have woven.

We have already seen that the regime's internal difficulties, the ever-growing opposition, was the main cause of Hitler's growing intransigence in foreign politics; and that this again caused further oppression at home, with further bitterness and further resistance. A vicious circle that one day must come to an end. It is therefore hardly surprising that after the stunning blow of Munich, days rather than weeks elapsed before oppositional activity was revived on an intensified and extended scale. It was at this period that the Church struggle, intensified again through the Nazis' brutal reaction to the Services of Intercession,<sup>1</sup> became more bitter than ever; it was at this period that the peasants, the shopkeepers, the craftsmen suffered worst and put up most of the resistance described in previous chapters. It was at this period that individual as well as collective opposition became more noticeable in Conservative quarters, and to these details already mentioned might be added the considerable stir caused by the arrest (at first secret) of Baron von 'Kardorf, for several years prior to 1914 parliamentary leader of the Conservative Party. The Baron had lived in political retirement for very long, yet he never concealed his dislike of the Nazis, and whether he did or did not engage in any active opposition, the fact remains that at the age of over seventy he was sentenced to fifteen years hard labour.

Most important of all in that post-Munich period was the increasing impetus of opposition among the labouring classes; to understand this properly we must revert to a tactic mentioned earlier, summarized in the slogan *Hinein*

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 129 *seq.* and p. 160.



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*in die Nazi-Organisationen* (Get within the Nazi organizations). It was not before 1938, or even 1939, that these "Trojan Horse" tactics, started as early as 1934, began to bear visible fruit. While in the early years their feasibility (or even practicability) was much argued and questioned, there is now no doubt that without such tactics the opposition could not have progressed. All this requires elucidation.

## Concerted Action

It will be remembered how in the first year, almost in the first weeks of the regime, the underground opposition was organized in a loosely knit and yet cohesive system of "cells." The system was elastic enough, yet in the long run it proved too rigid to withstand the perpetual strain; too many regular "key-men" and contacts were needed, and what with the Gestapo's ever-increasing strength, efficiency and ruthlessness, not even the shrewdest precaution on the part of the underground fighters was enough to save them from heavy casualty. These casualties were too heavy in fact to be borne, considering that when too many "key-men" were among those arrested it would often mean the breaking up of an entire district, to reorganize which would require infinite patience and involve enormous risk.

Therefore the system had to be made even more elastic, and for some time cells were reduced from five members to three. But in the long run this was no lasting remedy, and even though to a certain extent the cell system and many of its basic principles are maintained to this day, as early as 1934 and 1935 it was necessary to meet a new situation with a fundamentally new idea. Thus came into being the "Trojan Horse" tactics on an organized scale. The main reasons were two: first, the growing impossibility of remaining unsuspected if outside the Nazi organizations. For the famous Nazi drive for *Gleichschaltung* did not halt

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at "co-ordinating" political parties, trade unions, the Press, radio, cinema and all the big unions, associations and clubs connected with every aspect of public life. Nazi *Gleichschaltung* covered every conceivable form of organized human contact, even the village skittle club or the local society of amateur chicken farmers, both of which automatically belonged to a district Association, in turn belonging to a Provincial Union and finally to the Nazi Reich Sport Organization or Reich Agricultural Ministry.

Life in Germany has at all times been highly organized, and when the Nazis came to power all they had to do was to take those myriads of organizations, suppress or supplant some, add to them and nazify the lot. It will be thus readily understood that no one, no matter how well he might conceal his political opinions and activities, could in the long run stay out of that kind of organized life without arousing suspicion. Since to be inconspicuous is one of the basic principles of underground political work, this explains the first reason for the "Trojan Horse" tactics, precautionary and negative.

But there is a positive and more important reason. To understand it we must try to follow the thoughts of a German underground fighter at the end of the Nazis' first year of power, a period in the history of the working-class opposition which might well be called the heroic phase. A year of grim drama, horrible suffering, daring exploits, narrow escapes, high hopes and cruel disappointments. At its end the worker oppositionist reasoned thus:

What had he done, what had he achieved? He had planted a good many leaflets, kept contact with other groups, been caught by the Gestapo and, though they had beaten the stuffing out of him and tortured him, he had kept his mouth shut. They had gaoled him for a month or two, and that was bad. They had put him in a concentration

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camp, and that was worse. But they couldn't make him out, so they let him go. Now he was better camouflaged than ever—in another town, another district. He was an important man, a key-man with many contacts. He was planting more leaflets and even writing them. If he was caught again, he was done for.

But if only a handful of persons had been convinced by these leaflets, was not that worth a man's life? No, it was not. Can the regime be smashed by a handful of leaflets?

No, it could not. The life that he and his comrades were leading was too much like a game of hide-and-seek with the Gestapo—a mug's game, for the dice were heavily loaded against them. They lived, he concluded, in the thin air of conspiracy, in contact with one another, but not with the world at large. Leaflets and conspiracy were not enough. They must get back to the everyday working world, the Saturday afternoon's sport, the Sunday outing, the evening concert. They must make contact with men and women of the masses, and with the boys and girls with whom the future lies. Youth must be won back, and they must get at the Nazis too.

There was no way to achieve all this but through the organized life of the nation, which was in Nazi hands.

The "Trojan Horse" tactics were hotly argued and contested throughout the years 1934 and 1935, and when it was admitted that they were wise and necessary, there were many who found the emotional difficulties insuperable. "Put on a brown shirt? No! I can't do it. I'd have to think always of that Brownshirt beast who bashed in my pal's face so that one eye came trickling out. I've seen too much of what the Brownshirts have done. I can't do it!" "Me to go into a Nazi club," another one would say, "raise my arm and say *Heil Hitler* all the time? I couldn't do it. I'd have to think of how they lined us up at Dachau, spitting in

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our faces, kicking our bellies till we gave the Hitler salute. No, I couldn't do it!"

And yet they did it in time, and it did not turn out to be nearly as difficult as it had seemed. It was not that some tens of thousands of "underground-fighters" went all of a sudden to their local Nazi Headquarters, clicking their heels, shooting out their arms and saying: "Heil Hitler! From now on I am a convinced Nazi. Get me a uniform!" It was not that they all at once began to climb the various ladders in the Party hierarchy, with one of them shrewdly hidden in Himmler's own bodyguard, another firmly planted in the Führer's personal soup-kitchen, half of them spending the day's work in disintegrating the Party from within, and the other half outwitting the Gestapo by countering devilishly clever tricks with even greater cunning and resource.

It was neither as difficult nor so melodramatic nor so sudden. In point of fact the process was a very gradual one, and whatever direction there was from "Headquarters" must have been practically unnoticeable to the great majority of the rank and file. The change-over to the new tactics occurred when thousands of small groups all over the country had debated the issue for weeks or months and finally began to put it into practice, not in any spectacular manner but individually and unobtrusively. Those men who, ever since the Nazi *Gleichschaltung*, had kept aloof from the local skittle club or from the society of amateur chicken breeders, now began to join these organizations; at the same time, their sons and younger brothers would join the Hitler-Youth,<sup>1</sup> and their wives, daughters and

<sup>1</sup> The extent to which even children were staunchly practising the "Trojan Horse" tactics can be gauged from the following authenticated story (one of many similar ones): During the Jew Pogroms of November 1938, "Hitler-Youth" was officially sent out to paste up anti-Jew slogans. In certain towns the Gestapo was worried because, side by side with a

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sweethearts would join the various Nazi organizations for women. It was even more important to have a representative in the various local branches of the Nazi "Labour Front," where much better work could be done for their fellows than by conspiracy outside. Nor was it very difficult to secure such positions, for the Nazis badly needed organizers, experienced in handling workers and attending to their everyday problems. Thus, so long as such men—often former trade union officials—could be sufficiently convincing in their claim to reconciliation<sup>1</sup> they were highly welcome to the Nazis, and once "inside" they could often do a great deal to ameliorate local working conditions. This, of course, required much tact and shrewd judgment, so that the limits at which the Nazi authorities might consider such a man "too lenient" or even suspect might not be exceeded. He had to be careful, too, not to divulge his dual role to the majority even of those whom he knew to be themselves secret oppositionists. But the latter generally had a way of sizing up such "fake-Nazi" without explanation and merely on the strength of what practical good he was to the workers in adjusting local grievances.

All this may well be compared with the record in an earlier chapter of resistance within the factories,<sup>2</sup> the important difference being that in those early days almost all that work had to be concealed whereas now it was open and legal. This emphasizes an important aspect of the new tactic, the combination of legal methods with the exclusively

great many of the Party's antisemitic posters others had been stuck, carrying violent anti-Nazi slogans. The Gestapo never discovered the culprits and perhaps did not guess the truth. Some of those "Hitler-boys," assigned to fix the Nazi posters, were carrying (and pasting up) a supply of others given them by their own fathers and brothers.

<sup>1</sup> In most cases—particularly where their past history was known—they did not have to go to the length of pretending to be over-zealous Nazis.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 73 *seq.*

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"underground" ones employed heretofore. It was a primary principle now to use conspiratorial means only where no other course was possible, otherwise to keep strictly in the open and to beat the Nazis with their own arguments, and therefore with impunity. It was thus that the other new principle of mixing freely with the Nazis gained its special political significance.

Before elucidating this point it must be stressed that a primary object of Nazism was to induce the people to forsake the habit of thinking and to educate them to blind obedience to their rulers. Now this is by no means characteristic of the German people. It is true they are easily disciplined, but to say that they love blind obedience is to follow one of those prejudices that are founded on a complete ignorance of Germany. In point of fact, the German loves to argue and to reason, and this was what the oppositionists made use of, particularly when, under their new guise of "legality," they mixed with the young men and women who were sorely starved of their natural taste for argument by years of exclusively Nazi tutelage. They beat the Nazis with their own arguments, an easy task because of the glaring contrast between Nazi demagoguery and Nazi practice, and because of the innumerable contradictions in *Mein Kampf* and any speech by Hitler or other Nazi leaders. .

An oppositionist would draw a Nazi into argument by quoting Hitler or any other Nazi boss, and bring the talk round to matters affecting the other man's own life. "I liked the Führer's speech last night," he might say; "I liked particularly the point about the German working man's honour, didn't you?" Promptly the talk would be brought round to their mutual Departmental Chief: does *he* care about a German working man's honour? Not likely! If only the Führer could know about it, there'd be the devil to pay. And an old Party member too, and a S.S. leader into

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the bargain! And so on, concerning old Party members generally and S.S. leaders in particular and how it all affects the German working man's honour.

In one of his many florid and meaningless speeches "Labour Front" leader Dr. Ley coined a pretty phrase about every honest job of work deserving an honest wage, a phrase that certainly led to thousands of private arguments up and down the Reich, all very similar though each adapted to some particular local grievance: how, for instance, the statement squares with a refusal to pay overtime, or paying below proper rates, despite the fact that they are Nazi leaders. And the conversation would veer to labour conditions generally and to the honesty of Nazi leaders in particular. Such talk served to train people once more to exercise the art of independent thinking which the Nazis had tried so hard to stamp out.

The reader will remember, in the account of the "Himmler Document," the passage in which the Gestapo chief emphasizes his order that the S.S. must never argue and gives vent to ill-concealed fury about the manner in which "Labour Front" graft is being whispered about. This passage is most significant when viewed in the light of what has just been described; Himmler's wrath proves that even by then (late in 1937) the disintegration aimed at by the "Trojan Horse" tactics had made good headway. These tactics had already proved a puzzle and a worry to the Gestapo; they could hardly lay hands on every suspect, for that would have involved the arrest of hundreds of thousands of persons, and there was so little to work on, since the whole process was maintained without concealment. Arrests were made nevertheless, but more or less haphazardly. Meanwhile the process continued, slowly but surely.

That it was slow was inevitable. It took years to bear



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fruit, and it was not before 1938, particularly in the post-Munich period, that results became generally visible. Rather typical is the following:

A Cologne report speaks of trouble in a State airplane factory at which one thousand workers, mainly Storm-troopers, were employed. They were demanding a wage increase from 63 to 67 pfennigs per hour for unskilled workers and 85 pfennigs for skilled men. Instead of getting the rise they were told that the factory would be transferred to Central Germany and that they would all have to move with it within a week. Next day the enraged men donned full Storm-troop uniform and demanded their papers, their spokesman explaining why they wished to quit. The management called out a detachment of picked Himmler Guards and the S.S. Commandant gave the men a fierce dressing-down, describing them as enemies of the State who ought to be in concentration camps.

But not one of them was arrested, and though they did not get the demanded rise, those with families were allowed to stay, and only those who volunteered were transferred to the new factory. But all these men, even though they still wear their brown shirts, hardly bother to conceal the fact that they have lost faith in Nazi promises.

If read in the light of what was written in earlier pages, events like this gain added significance, and the reader can well imagine the thousands of arguments over a number of years that were needed before these men, steeped in Nazi ideology, were ripe to act as they did.

No less significant is the following report from the same period:

Trouble that had been brewing for a long time came to a head at the Düsseldorf *Rhein-Metall Werke*, second largest armament works in Germany. So many cases had occurred of obstruction, deliberate slackening of work and other forms of passive resistance, that the management called a factory meeting.

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Thousands of workers assembled in the great central hall. The local Labour Front Leader, Herr Bangert, did not dare to face the angry workers in person, and had his speech relayed from the safety of his office, overlooking the hall. He said that in future any slackening would be ruthlessly dealt with as sabotage and that all personal inconvenience to employees must be overlooked in view of the Führer's aim of Greater Germany. Here the heckling began. "We won't be victimized for your Greater Germany," shouted some of the workers; "Give us decent working hours and more wages and liberties!"

Then, from a corner, came the shout "Down with Hitler." A few seconds' stunned silence followed, then the shout was taken up by a score of others, and immediately tumultuous applause broke loose. Bangert at once stopped his speech, and that same afternoon a notice was posted in the factory threatening the death penalty to anyone spreading gossip about these events.

Actually, this was the first authenticated case of "Down with Hitler" publicly shouted in the Third Reich; otherwise it is just one of many similar cases of that period.

A subsequent chapter will pursue the development of this trend up to the outbreak of the war.

## Czech Interlude

Strictly speaking, the struggle of the Czech people for its freedom does not seem to fall within the scope of a book devoted to the struggle of the German people against Nazism; yet both problems are closely related, not merely because of the common platform created by a common enemy, but even more because of the important repercussions of the Czech struggle on that of the German people.

Between the opposition to Nazism in Germany and in Czechoslovakia there is this difference: in Germany it is an opposition, varying in intensity, of various strata of the population against the ruling clique of their own country; in Czechoslovakia it is the most embittered and active opposition of an entire people against an alien invader. It is no exaggeration to say that, regardless of party and class and creed, ninety-nine out of every hundred Czechs can be considered active oppositionists; in Slovakia that percentage is not much smaller. Thus, while differences of party and class must needs retard the creation in Germany and restrict the rise of a really nation-wide "popular front" (differences which the Nazis shrewdly exploited to keep themselves in power), in Czechoslovakia that "popular front" was automatically created on the day the Nazis marched into Prague; it was created on the basis of national oppression and national will for freedom, strong enough to outweigh almost all other differences and to shame into

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silence many of those who had their personal reasons for welcoming Nazi rule over their country.

Quite significant is an incident that happened during the very entry of the German army into Prague, an incident vouched for by a friend of the author's who happened to be a witness. He saw a youth pick up a handful of sleet from the gutter and throw it into a German soldier's face. The soldier, almost blinded, instinctively raised his bayonet. The young Czech tore open his shirt and shouted: "Stab me, you swine!" For two or three seconds the onlookers stood aghast. Then the German soldier shrugged his shoulders, wiped the sleet from his face, and marched on.

It is a significant incident, but not a typical one. The Czechs are not given to temperamental outbursts; they are a quiet, stubborn people, tough and dour, their air of stolidity and docility tempered by a strong sense of humour. They have the ideal make-up for underground opposition; they are born to passive resistance, and as a people they have had centuries of training in the task. Even now there are many still young enough to take part in active opposition who yet are old enough to have been oppositionists to Hapsburg rule.

But Hapsburg rule was never as bitterly and universally hated by the Czechs as Nazi rule is, and every witness agrees that the Czech people show great dignity in the way, in which they express their hatred by open contempt, passive resistance and secret sabotage. They know how to make life unpleasant for the invader. A Nazi only has to sit down at a restaurant table for all the Czechs to rise quietly and leave immediately. When entering a tram a Czech will prefer to stand in a far corner than take a seat beside a Nazi. Opposition takes the form of a secret nation-wide conspiracy, and it is both striking and pathetic in the event of mass demonstration. This can take a negative form, as for

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instance when the Nazis wish to stage a big public demonstration of their own on some such occasion as the Führer's birthday, complete with flags and military bands and parading troops. On such a day no Czech will lend himself to humour the Nazis by forming part of the gaping and admiring crowd they seek, and the glittering parade will take place in practically deserted streets and thus entirely fail in its purpose of "impressing" the people. The Czechs will spend the day behind closed curtains, and whoever must venture out will look away with studied indifference when the parade passes.

But it is a different story when the day happens to be dear to the hearts of the Czechs themselves. The late President Masaryk's birthday or the anniversary of their lost republic's foundation are such events. For the celebration under Nazi rule of a national festival like these a definite tradition has already formed itself, as if by magic consent of the entire people. It is tacitly agreed to lay a flower on the grave of the unknown soldier; not a wreath nor even a bunch, but just one modest flower. Nor would people arrive in large crowds and so give the Nazis cause for interference, since "mass-meetings" are strictly *verboten*. So they come singly or in little groups, each person laying down his flower and pausing for only a minute, that others may have their chance without forming a crowd. But before the day is done tens of thousands have filed past, have passed a solemn minute and laid a token, and by night these flowers have become a veritable floral mountain, monument and living symbol of a people's indomitable will to be free.

But the Czechs have some less solemn methods too of showing defiance to their tyrants, one of the favourite pastimes being to paste anti-Nazi labels on the back of Nazi leaders' cars. This makes thousands of adult Czechs

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laugh like schoolboys who have played a successful prank on a particularly unpopular teacher; yet it is only further evidence of a proud people's indomitable will to show resistance and defiance in every possible way. Wherever one goes in Czechoslovakia one can feel that atmosphere of constant resistance and defiance. Enter a tram car with one of the official Czech newspapers in your hand and it is more than likely that someone will deftly slip a leaflet into your pocket; the leaflet will tell you that it is no use reading the kind of paper that will give you only a Czech translation of Göbbel's propaganda. As likely as not the leaflet will contain the famous "Ten Commandments for every Czech," which tells the people how best to cold-shoulder the Nazis and to sabotage their efforts. These commandments must now be known to every single Czech, and, among various shrewd devices to bring them to the notice of the people, "chain-letters" have been almost as notable as frequent references to them in church sermons, despite the Gestapo's watchful and suspicious attendance. There is nothing to prevent a priest from preaching about the ten commandments; but the congregation will understand to which series of commandments the priest subtly refers.

The Czech freedom movement from the start sought close co-operation with that of Austria, by exchanging propaganda material and by supporting each other in every possible way. Wherever, in the early days, Austrian troops happened to form part of the German army of occupation fraternization with the people was so instantaneous that almost at once the Nazis would replace the troops with Prussians, mostly youngsters still regarded as sufficiently under the influence of Göbbels' anti-Czech propaganda to be suitable for the grim role of taskmasters to a subject people. Yet this proved also to be a serious psychological

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miscalculation, and very soon the Nazis had to rely for such tasks almost exclusively on special squads of their own storm-troopers, trained at home to bully and suppress. As to the Reichswehr troops and many other Germans who, mostly on some official business, were brought to Prague during the first weeks of occupation, they could not but be impressed by the dignity of the Czechs under duress and their icy scorn and hatred; they could not but suffer under their own complete isolation, or be puzzled by what they saw and heard in Sudetenland, Bohemia and Moravia, when they compared it with what Góbbels had told them of Czech atrocities and Czech baseness and depravity. They had perforce to draw their own conclusions, and there can be no doubt that (professional rowdies excepted) the majority of German troops, officials and visitors came back from the "Protectorate" as more or less convinced anti-Nazis. Some of them were forced to come back pretty soon, and nothing could be more significant than the following authenticated report which came out of Germany late in May 1939:

The German Army which first occupied Czechoslovakia and has since been replaced by other troops because the High Command considered the soldiers to be unreliable, is in further trouble. The men are not even allowed to see their own families in Germany. In one week, in an anti-tank battery in Eberswalde (not far from Berlin), the following punishments were meted out: ten days' solitary confinement, forty-five days confined to barracks, and twelve warnings, all for insubordination.

The Nazi authorities had, of course, a very obvious reason why they did not want these men to see their families: the truth about Czechoslovakia was not to be spread further than the Nazis could possibly avoid. But it spread nevertheless and through a great variety of agencies, not the least of which was (and is) the living evidence of hun-

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dreds of thousands of Czech workers imported into the Reich for forced labour, who were not slow to find contact with their German fellow-workers. Nor were the Germans slow in voicing the people's real opinion on the Czech problem. Here is an extract from a handbill widely distributed in Rhineland factories:

Rhinelanders! Do you remember our own bitterness in seeing our homeland occupied by foreign troops? If you do, then think of the Czech people likewise humiliated by foreign troops occupying their soil! . . .

Even more outspoken was another leaflet secretly circulated all over Germany in the early summer of 1939. Here is an extract from it:

. . . We wish to be masters in our own house. Correct. But we have no business in other people's houses. So out with our German army from Czechoslovakia!

Small wonder that the Nazi authorities had to keep changing their various emissaries on the dangerous soil of Prague, though this practice had the obvious drawback of exposing ever new groups of Germans to the contagious germ of truth about Nazism. There are, in fact, innumerable cases on record of individual Germans seeking every chance of sympathetic contact with the Czech cause. Even more significant seems the fact that there was hardly any need for the Nazi authorities to "purge" the bookshops of Prague on their arrival; for, in the very first few days of the occupation, German soldiers, officers and officials had eagerly purchased the whole available stock of German literature, which was very substantial, including not merely outspokenly anti-Nazi books, brochures and magazines, but every kind of good German literature which, for one reason or another, is *verboten* in the Third Reich.



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In a subsequent chapter on the present war, we will see to what extent the growing revolutionary situation in Czechoslovakia might have a direct bearing on bringing matters to a climax within the Reich. But even from the present situation there is a most instructive conclusion to be drawn for a proper understanding of the entire problem of the German people's seven years' struggle against Hitlerism. There are many who have been forced to conclude that, if the Opposition within the Reich was as strong and varied as has been described, surely it should have made an end of Hitlerism long ago. But Czechoslovakia is a clear example of the difficulty of the task. In that country the Opposition comprises virtually 100 per cent of the population and is, moreover, active, heroic, shrewd and well organized. Yet at the moment of writing the Nazis have kept power for nearly nine months, in spite of various risings and revolts, which shows simply enough that it is foolish to underrate the power of machine guns exclusively in the hands of those prepared to use them with utter ruthlessness.

There will, of course, be more revolts, and one day there will be that final one to break the back of Nazism; on that day, the German as well as the Czechoslovak people will, in unison and once and for ever, do away with their common oppressors, the Nazis and all they stand for.

## The Last Phase

In a previous chapter we have seen how the organized adoption of "Trojan Horse" tactics, after years of slow but methodical progress, began to show steadily increasing results throughout the year 1938 and during the winter from the Munich agreement to the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia. But it was only after the latter event that the movement began to make really decisive headway.

Nothing could more accurately describe the situation at the beginning of that period than a statement made to a friend of the author's by a man who, a Prussian aristocrat by descent, a prominent Nazi official for reasons of camouflage, had a very clear insight into conditions by reason of his intimate contacts both with the Opposition and the ruling Nazi clique. This is what that man said in mid-April 1939:

Up to last August,<sup>1</sup> the majority of the people was apathetic and uninterested. Ever since that time, the Opposition has been gaining a real mass basis. The Nazis brought that on themselves, partly by over-exertion caused through concentration on war, and partly by the incumbent proletarianizing of vast masses of the lower middle classes.

At this stage the worker opposition had no longer to content itself with fighting a wage cut here or gaining a

<sup>1</sup> That was about one month before the Munich agreement and the preceding phase of imminent danger of war. •

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minor amelioration there; nor was it a case, any longer, of small, isolated actions. A mass movement, capable of major concerted actions and, what is more, of taking the offensive by demanding (and quite often achieving) not inconsiderable increase of wages and improvement of working conditions, was fast developing. The measures used were passive resistance and organized *ca'canny*, and the movement was particularly strong and successful among the miners, the dockyard workers and the fortification labourers, mainly those working on the "Siegfried Line."

The fortification workers, though not the biggest section numerically, formed perhaps the most important. It was there that the movement gained its strongest impetus, and for this there are three reasons, two of which are manifest: first, that labour conditions on fortification work from the beginning were atrocious, and second, this kind of work was most obviously and directly connected with war preparations. But by far the most important reason is that the nature of that work happened to necessitate the temporary conglomeration of large numbers of men from all parts of the country. It was a situation entirely different from normal factory conditions where the men, year in and year out, are familiar with each other, and where the new blood that comes in is quickly reduced to much the same pattern. On fortification work it was otherwise: a new atmosphere, new and untried labour conditions and, most important, new contacts, a sudden confluence of hundreds of thousands of men from every corner of the land. A great many of these men had been trained for years in "Trojan Horse" tactics as well as illegal activities; but they had been working in small groups, often even in isolated groups, and whatever contacts they had had been as sparse and hazardous as they were now manifold and relatively easy. Such was the sudden opportunity given

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these men, under the best possible conditions of putting their theories and years of experiment to the first really big and decisive practical test. And that is exactly what they did—to what extent and with what success might be pictorialized by a few quotations from masses of similar evidence available, mostly letters, etc., fully authenticated, from fortification labourers:

*Baden.*—In a small village some fifteen hundred men are being housed, sent on forced labour from all over the Reich. They are building “concrete potato cellars,” as one of them called it. They sleep in barns, inns and schools, up to a hundred men in one hall. They are all grumbling.

*Frankfort.*—Every morning the big market hall square is crowded with hundreds of trucks laden with men called up for fortification labour. They are going to Pirmasens, and according to the number plates of the trucks they must be coming from every part of the Reich.

Men are called up without the slightest regard for private affairs. A man of sixty who, after years of unemployment, had just found congenial work in town was told one night that he would be shipped next morning at six. His protest that he was not physically fit enough for fortification labour was disregarded.

The interests of factories are disregarded just as ruthlessly. Out of the three thousand men employed at the Metal Works of Voigt and Häffner, five hundred were all of a sudden called up for fortification labour, even though the firm is busy with armaments orders.

The firm of Mouson had to give up more than thirty workers at once. . . . Most embittered are the women whose husbands have been deported for fortification labour. Most of the women do not even know where their husbands are working. Letters are always forwarded and stamped in Frankfort. Allowances are paid unpunctually. Several of the women have staged demonstrations of their own, shouting in unison “Give our husbands back to us!”

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*Hamburg.*—Owing to the scarcity of fruit several marmalade factories have cut down production and dismissed some of their staff. These men have at once been conscripted for fortification labour. All other factories must give up 10 per cent of their staff for the same purpose. In armament factories the vacancies are being filled by women.

The following is even more significant of the manner in which those men, thrown together from every part of the country, had learned the lesson (and were reaping the fruits) of several years of training in "Trojan Horse" tactics. It is an extract from a letter of a man who worked on the Siegfried Line:

. . . As soon as we arrived we had a very good look round, and almost at once we had a great many new contacts to continue the work on our well-established lines. We are not far from the French frontier here . . . , and we started at a wage of 47 pfennigs per hour. We sent a delegation to the Labour Front, asking them to arrange a rise; but they refused to do anything about it. So we sent a delegation straight to the management. They refused and threatened us with the Gestapo. So we began to slow down work. The Nazi foreman kicked up a terrific fuss and threatened us with the Gestapo and all sorts of things. So we slowed down some more. Two hours later the management sent for our delegates. I was one of them. When we got to the office there were three Gestapo officials called in to attend the negotiations. I suppose they were there to impress us. But they didn't. We held out for seventy pfennigs. After the haggling had lasted for more than an hour one of the Nazi foremen came running in from the works, panting that the men had downed tools altogether. "Why?" thundered the manager. Because we delegates had been gone so long that our pals thought we'd been arrested, and they wouldn't resume work before we got back. We got back. And we got the 70 pfennigs too. . . .

Even more significant of the wider political aspects of

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that movement is the following extract from a letter, also from a man who worked on the Siegfried Line:

"It's incredible how quickly news spreads out here; whenever the boys somewhere else on the line have some success or other we hear of it instantly. . . . In our section we have some regular slogans now, such as "Don't do overtime. The less you slave the sooner Adolf breaks his neck." . . . But the grandest thing about it all is that we have here not just the United Front of the Socialist Parties but practically a real people's front; there are fellows here of every political shade, and yet we're all getting on with each other and, in fact, sticking up for each other through thick and through thin. And, mind you, it's not merely in our own daily problems and bread-and-butter interests that we're sticking together; it's also in the main problem of smashing the Hitler regime. Of course there are plenty of spies and stoolpigeons here too. But it's just because we men understand each other so well and many of us are trained in conspiratorial work, that those swine can't do us much harm. Here's hoping that you are making headway too, and that the day isn't far now when we can send the whole Nazi pack to the devil. . . .

To what extent such temper and such activities harassed the Nazis is clearly illuminated by an incident typical of Nazi methods as well as of the workers' reaction. In summer 1939, "Labour Front" leader Dr. Ley hoped to "appease" the workers of the Siegfried Line by distributing special medals in token of the national importance of their work; but a great many workers refused the medal, and often enough they would shout in unison, "We do not want medals, we want better food, fewer working hours and more pay."

Matters came to a head when the Superintendent of the Siegfried Line, Dr. Todt,<sup>1</sup> asked the fortification workers

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Todt, an intimate friend of Hitler, and his favourite town-planner, is in charge of every building activity in the Reich.

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through the Saarbrücken Wireless Station to submit their complaints by letter either to the Wireless Station or to the Social Office of the Labour Front. It was evidently thought that only a few would dare to write and could then be arrested as "ring-leaders." But so many thousands did write that, what with the political urgency (three months before the war) of the fortification work and the scarcity of labour, no arrests were made, even though most of these letters—to quote Dr. Todt's own comment—"are of a character contradictory and dangerous to the *Volksgemeinschaft*." Since there was neither reply nor consideration of the grievances, the workers intensified their ca'canny tactics and finally embarked on a real strike on the whole length of the line from Gersweiler to Saarbrücken. This was on June 10th, and the Nazis gave in within less than a week. They could not at that juncture afford either to see the movement spread further or to resort to too draconic measures. So, on June 16th, in a special broadcast to the Siegfried Line workers (relayed from Saarbrücken and Cologne) Dr. Todt announced that the Government would be willing to make concessions and "that the huge number of letters received from the workers would thereby receive a reply in the affirmative." Actually, the men did receive some concessions, such as a special bonus of 50 marks, cheap return-fares for their families and an assurance that they should not be made to work more than a sixty-hour week without pay for overtime. It was mainly on that score that trouble flared up again, and by mid-August it was estimated that as many as thirty-five thousand workers on the Siegfried Line were engaged either in some form of ca'canny or in sporadic sit-down strikes which, even though they would last a few hours only, would quite often achieve their purpose.

No less important than the movement among the fortifi-

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cation workers was that in the big dockyards at Hamburg, Bremen, Kiel and Wilhelmshaven. Here, too, it was not until summer 1939 that things really came to a head; but trouble had been brewing for years before, and there had been some concerted action as early as March 1936, on the occasion of an important Hitler speech. At Blohm and Voss, Hamburg (the biggest German shipbuilding yard), five thousand workers had been shepherded into the main hall to listen to the relayed speech, and in the midst of it they had the courage to leave demonstratively; this was a pre-arranged and concerted action, for the same thing happened at the Kiel *Germania-Werft*, where one thousand workers were lined up to listen to the same speech. These men were particularly furious at having to stand for hours, after a hard working day, to listen to something they did not want; so they committed sheer sacrilege by interrupting their Führer's voice with shouts of "We are hungry," "We want to go home." When they left the hall they came to blows with the Storm-troopers lining the gates and bombarded them with nuts and bolts. Later, a number of men at the *Germania-Werft* as well as at Blohm and Voss were arrested; but most of them were soon released, partly because their work was needed, and partly because the authorities were afraid of sabotage, should punitive measures be too severe.

In their subsequent activities the dockyard workers began more and more to use their new tactics; in their discussions and leaflets they would never fail to quote statements from Nazi leaders such as Dr. Ley's famous phrase about "the fair wage due to every German worker." And having thus formulated and justified their demands they would give them the necessary weight by organized ca'canny. It was slow, methodical plodding, which gained momentum in the same degree to which the Nazis, what



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with increasing pressure on the shipyards and shortage of labour, became more dependent on the goodwill of the workers. The Nazis had finally to grant at least part of their demands: a rise of 8 pfennigs per hour, up to 80 pfennigs for skilled workers, a rise of 7 pfennigs up to 70 pfennigs for half-skilled workers, and a rise of 8 pfennigs up to 66 pfennigs for unskilled workers. It is particularly noteworthy that the rise was highest in the case of unskilled workers, and this is clear evidence of the concerted action that backed the demand; for whatever concession might have previously been granted by the Nazis would always have applied to highly skilled workers only, when they happened to be indispensable.

To what extent by 1939 the growing solidarity of the dockyard workers facilitated organized resistance is also evidenced by an almost amusing incident which happened in the Navy Yard at Wilhelmshaven, shortly before Hitler visited it to make a speech at the launching of the battleship *Tirpitz*. The yard management had decided to celebrate the great event by handing the Führer a present of 100,000 marks to be spent on some charitable activity. Since it was to be "a present from the entire yard," every worker was to contribute 8 marks, which were to be deducted in eight weekly instalments. When the workers heard of this they lodged a formal protest, stating that none of them had eight marks to spare and that, if the management wished to make the Führer a present, they should pay for it themselves. The protest went unheeded, and each man found his next pay-envelope minus one mark. Next morning the large majority of these workers simply failed to put in an appearance. Since it was impossible to arrest thousands of men (when their work was so urgently needed), word was given that, if only the deduction was in question, that might be reconsidered. Next morning the men came back

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to work as if nothing had happened. Next pay-day no mark was deducted, and a few days later a notice was posted announcing the decision to refrain from making the Führer a present.

The third and economically the most important of the three big Labour movements of 1939 was that of the coal miners. It was also chronologically the first to start in real earnest, and it was in fact from the mines that the movement spread to the dock workers and the fortification labourers. In April 1939, the reduction of coal output (due already to organized ca'canny) caused Göring's decree raising working hours for the second time, this time to almost nine hours. Nine hours cannot be worked in a mine at full pressure without danger to health, and the miners of the Ruhr and Saar set out to give their masters practical proof of the fact that in nine hours they could produce no more than they did in eight. According to official figures,<sup>1</sup> the average daily production in the Ruhr mines was as follows:

444,781 tons in the week from May 14-20, 1939.

431,921 tons in the week from May 21-27, 1939.

423,980 tons in the week from May 28th—June 3rd.

423,059 tons in the week from June 4th-10th.

To grasp the significance of such a steady fall in production, it is only necessary to add that these figures date from just after the increase in working hours and that six months earlier (in November 1938) eight-hour-day production totalled 429,662 tons, i.e. exceeding by 6½ thousand tons the production of a nine-hour day the following June. The disparity is even larger than the figures show; for the poorer results were achieved with an increased number of men as well as the longer day. In the Ruhr mines the average

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of June 11 and 17, 1939.

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daily production of May 1939 was just 1,000 tons lower than that of May 1938, in spite of lengthening the day by three-quarters of an hour and increasing the number of men employed by 36,000.

Since the Ruhr miners alone number more than 300,000, the political significance of such organized opposition is rendered clear; and the growing intensity of the concerted movement among the fortification labourers, the miners and the dockyard workers can be considered as the most important and far-reaching event in anti-Nazi activity preceding the war. It may well have considerable influence on developments of the present war and its aftermath.

As to the mainly non-socialist opposition during the months before the war special mention should be made of the trouble in the Tyrol. After all his tirades about liberating "downtrodden German brethren," Hitler definitely gave in to Mussolini in respect of the truly German, and truly oppressed, minority in the South Tyrol. So flagrant a betrayal of a principle a thousand times avowed was a great shock to the North Tyrol and brought bitterness to many patriots there who had been adherents of the Nazi Party mainly because they had hoped it would liberate the Tyrolean *irredenta* in Italy. In dashing these hopes Hitler surely lost every friend he may have had in that region, and active opposition soon became so strong that Gestapo-Chief Himmler himself went down to inspect the punitive measures he had ordered. This only added fuel to the fire of revolt, which flamed even brighter when Tyrolean feelings were further wounded by the removal of some of the statues of Tyrolean national heroes. Mention of "the deal with Mussolini" was made a criminal offence. There were wholesale arrests of peasants, churches were defiled and priests maltreated; the Tyroleans became more and more embittered, and free-for-all fights were soon as regular an

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occurrence as the organized stoning of the imported S.S. by the sturdy peasants. The affair was brought to a head shortly before the war, when the deal with Mussolini was consummated by forcibly uprooting the Germans of South Tyrol from the land on which their forefathers had lived for centuries, and deporting them wholesale to the Reich, where many of them were put to fortification labour.

Efforts were made to keep the news of these unpleasant affairs from the German people, but it nevertheless spread rapidly and caused much indignation throughout the population, not least in Conservative quarters where a great many "chain-letters" were circulating, mainly in criticism of Hitler's "Rome axis" politics.

At this period the opposition of peasants must not be forgotten; they were now circulating regular issues of "illegal" literature, from which the following is a quotation:

The Nazis have grown used to boasting "We can do everything." If they can do everything, they can also keep their promises. We peasants want to remind them of their promises. We shall go on reminding them of their promises, everywhere, all the time. We will see to it that they keep them.

Catholic oppositionists were also issuing leaflets of their own. Here is an extract from one circulated in July 1939 and signed "Catholic activists of Berlin":

All true Catholics must stand together to-day. We must be united. We stretch out the hand of brotherhood to everyone who also wants peace, freedom and justice. Away with tyranny! We want the right to voice our opinions, we want democracy and freedom of faith! Friends, the cause of justice will triumph, of this we are sure. Courage, friends! Stand fast; agitate for peace! Make your opposition heard!

Such was the mood of the people when the Danzig crisis began to take its sinister course, Hitler's position, of

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course, was now much better than a year before when he had to bluff his way out of the Sudeten crisis. For one thing, he had not this time to face anything comparable to the Czech military defences; his strategic position was splendid, and the apple of discord was practically in his pocket before he even started the row. Besides, Danzig being really a German city, the issue was much clearer than that of Sudetenland, and while even the most venomous Göbbels propaganda never could rouse the German people to hate the Czechs, the Poles were distinctly unpopular. But this does not mean that the no less venomous propaganda campaign against the Poles roused the German people to a frenzy of hatred and national enthusiasm; if anything, the very contrary was achieved. It had too much the taste of last year's stew warmed up and given another name. The people were sick and tired of it, and all they felt in those critical weeks, apart from their own hardships, was apprehension and suspicion.

Then, like a bombshell came the Russian pact. Its effect on the German people, generally speaking, was bewildering. But this statement requires qualification. Three distinct groups of the people must be considered to assess its results.

Take the adherents of the Nazi Party first; most of them were shocked and disgusted, unable to stomach this sudden *volte face* from everything they had for years been taught to believe so fervently. Now they knew not *what* to believe, and many that day severed their allegiance, even though they kept their uniforms and swastikas and tried to behave as usual. But nothing for them was quite the same.

As to the active opposition, particularly the Communists and to a certain extent the Social Democrats and other factions, they were delighted by the event. They thought first of the enormous "ideological" price Hitler had been made to pay; they saw it as an admission of the extreme

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weakness of the regime; they hoped that it would mark the beginning of the end.

As to the unpolitical masses of all strata, long-suffering and wavering, they were just bewildered, torn between vague apprehension and faint hope that, if anything, this might abolish or at least retard the fearful threat of war.

Then the guns began to roar across the Polish border. Never was a people dragged into war more unwillingly and more unwittingly.



## Part Four

### THE WAR





## The War

If previous chapters helped to destroy some fallacies, the greatest yet remains to be destroyed; it is at once the most recent and the most dangerous of them all. It is the belief that the Opposition welcomed the present war as an indispensable means for the destruction of Hitlerism.

Nothing could be further from the truth, and—if a comparative can possibly be added to so superlative a calamity as war inevitably is—nothing could have been a greater calamity for the Opposition than the present conflict. The difficulties of oppositional work, bad enough at the best of times, are immeasurably increased under war conditions, and, what with contacts dislocated by mobilisation, surveillance more rigid and punishments more severe than ever, the one and only direct war effect which might be considered an advantage for oppositional work is the black-out—which, from the start, has been widely utilized for putting up anti-Hitler and anti-war slogans. Otherwise, at least for a time, the war could be nothing but a severe setback for oppositional work, undoing, overnight as it were, what had been achieved in years of patient plodding, particularly in the three big concerted labour movements of the past six or eight months. Overtime pay, for instance, which had been struggled for so long and doggedly, was eliminated by one of the very first war-measures; but the very fact that within less than three months it had to be

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reinstated proves that the German workers had not learnt their bitter lesson in vain and that their movement, though gravely hampered by the war, was by no means dead; it is now, in fact, showing increasing signs of a new life.

It has already been said that in the Polish crisis, where Hitler was prepared (if not desirous) for war, he was in a much superior position than in the preceding year's Sudeten crisis, where he was hoping that his threats would not need to be enforced: the Danzig issue, being much more justified than the Sudeten issue, was far more popular (or rather less unpopular),<sup>1</sup> to say nothing of the fact that the Poles were heartily disliked, and, owing to the attitude of some of their officials, not always quite without reason, particularly in frontier districts. In the other parts of the country, with feelings blunted by an interminable series of crises, people simply refused to believe the worst; for one example only, several reports from Bavaria bear out the fact that, as late as August 28th, the men were loath to leave their harvest work, and some actually refused to comply with their calling-up orders—they thought it was mere ballyhoo anyway. Even for some time after war had been declared a great many Germans, puzzled by rumours and propaganda, refused to believe that they were actually at war with Britain and France; and while the Opposition's illegal propaganda and German broadcasts from abroad soon destroyed such illusions, it is a fact that as late as October soldiers coming from the Polish front knew nothing at all of Germany's war with the Western Powers.

There can be no doubt that disillusionment, apprehension and resentment alike were very considerable when, in the sixth or seventh week after the declaration, the bulk of the German people began to realize their position. Nor can

<sup>1</sup> Unpopular only inasmuch as no issue sponsored by the Hitler regime could be popular with the German masses.

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there be any doubt that Hitler's "peace-offensive" of mid-October was very cleverly handled by Góbbels' propaganda; in shifting the blame for the continuation of the war on the ~~Western~~ Powers, all he had to do was to exploit the German people's utter confusion as to the Allies' precise aims.

When trying to assess the true mood of the bulk of the German people towards the end of the second month of war, these seem to be the salient points: no enthusiasm at all over the Polish victories (there had been hardly any while they were being fought, and four weeks later they ~~seemed~~ to have been forgotten); fear of currency inflation and growing scarcity resulting in a rush for buying anything at any price (fur shops were practically sold out by the end of October); resentment of the existing scarcity, restrictions and severity, directed partly against the Nazis and partly against the British blockade; apprehension about the future, caused by confusion as to the real aims of the Western Powers as well as of Soviet Russia.

In these circumstances it will be comprehensible that the country was rocked from end to end by an amazing crop of rumours, some of them planted by the Nazis, some most distasteful to them. These are examples: France has asked for a separate peace—the King of England has abdicated in favour of the Duke of Windsor, who will start peace negotiations at once—the British have a new bomber with an absolutely noiseless motor—Italy is about to join the Allies—French soldiers are swimming the Rhine within shouting distance of the Germans so as to tell them that they will not fire another shot at Germans and will shoot only Britishers henceforth—most of the French soldiers have left the front which is now being manned almost exclusively by Negroes.

There can be no doubt that at one time or another millions of people believed in these rumours, and though

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some of them quite obviously bear the stamp of Göbbels' office, it is evident that such fantastic stories can only grow and find credence in an atmosphere of nervous tension. Of this atmosphere even better evidence can be found in a number of authenticated reports and letters which could be smuggled out; to quote from only one of them, here is an extract from a (woman) A.R.P. Warden's letter:

It's too bad the way one finds surly faces wherever one goes. The other day, when I rang a front door bell a man shouted from a window: "What d'you want? Another collection-plate? I'm about sick of this!" Finally he came down and apologized for his irritability. It's nerves, he said, and can't I understand him? I'd chuck my A.R.P. job this minute if I could.

Familiarized with Nazi technique readers will by now have learnt to watch the dates of certain events within the Third Reich and by comparison to understand their implications; it is well to remember that at the end of October the people was violently agitated by a nation-wide crop of wild rumours (some of them deliberately planted by Göbbels); a week later came what is commonly called the "Munich bomb outrage." But before dealing with this latest of the major Nazi "scoops," we must return to the beginning of the war and bring the story up to date with regard to the resistance from the working classes and other quarters.

We have seen that this resistance was gravely handicapped by war conditions, one reason being the dislocation of well-established contacts, another that practically the entire grim scheme outlined in the "Himmler document"<sup>1</sup> has

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 255 *seq.* These facts are borne out and supplemented by a report in the London *Times* of October 19th, according to which "a new organization for watching over German public opinion is being formed by the S.S. Black Guards. It is to be under Dr. Reischle, a group leader of the Guards, who will work directly under Himmler. Neutral travellers con-

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now been realized, the "Death's-head-squads" have been multiplied, restrictions and punitive measures are more severe than ever, the Reich has indeed become that "Battle-field Inner-Germany" of which Himmler spoke; surely there could be no better evidence of this than a broadcast over all Nazi transmitters on December 26th—a full hour's very "colourful" narration (i.e. complete with military bands, "impromptu interviews," etc.) of S.S. activities "in cleaning up behind the advancing German armies in Poland" and "in keeping an iron grip on the home-front." I am quoting literally from an account that called the concentration camps "islands necessary to avoid the disintegration of the German people"; of the many gruesome incidents reported with obvious glee I will only mention the one about two prisoners "who had dared to raise their hands against their S.S. guard"; omitting to mention what unbearable provocation must have driven those wretched men to so desperate an act the speaker made a pause and then continued in a tone of stark sadism unbelievable to anyone who hasn't heard it: "You know what we did to these men? We hanged them for all the camp to see! By Jove we did!" The speaker was the man who had personally ordered the hanging, and there can be no doubt that the nation-wide broadcasting of such a subject after four months of war (and at Christmas of all times) was a matter of considered policy: to try to

firm the news that there is indignation in Germany at the retention of party members of military age to watch the home front and serve "racial-political purposes." Official explanations have stated that the S.A.—brown-shirted storm-troopers—are carrying out various duties "helping the Reichswehr." Thirty per cent of the Storm-troopers are on the home front, some of them acting as coastguards, frontier officials, and railway guards. The eastern formations had the task of following the advance of the German troops and restoring order, which function no doubt included special attention to Polish Jews. Most of the leaders are said to be now N.C.O.s and officers with the army. The bloodthirsty Youth Leader, Baldur von Schirach, appears to have stayed at home."

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keep the people in as abject fear as possible. No doubt, this is not without significance.

On the other hand, obviously, the incentive for resistance is greater than ever, and resistance indeed there is, growing steadily in spite of frightful casualties; at the moment of writing (December 1939), the "Home front" casualties indubitably exceed those at the front.<sup>1</sup> Beheadings are the order of the day, and there is evidence of hundreds of workers shot out of hand or court-martialled for sabotage. The first known act of major sabotage occurred early in September in the Berlin Air Ministry, whose entrance ~~was~~ wrecked by an explosion. Another authenticated case occurred in a Naval port where, in the Power House, a short-circuit was effected by a spanner carefully planted in the machinery. Because it was an extremely expert job, the chief electrician was arrested; but he could prove an alibi. The real culprit was not disclosed, and to save their faces, the Nazis finally gave it out that a French spy had caused the trouble. It certainly was not a French spy. It took until the afternoon of the next day to repair the damage.

Particularly severe is the Gestapo's sabotage control in the mines, and reports from pits in the Aachen district mention a 50-Mark bonus (and the promise not to name the informer) for every case reported of deliberate going-slow. Not many of these bonuses were earned; but the

<sup>1</sup> Particularly in the Czech "Protectorate," where persecution is even more cruel than within the Reich. Yet the people's resistance has never faltered, in spite of the brutal suppression of the (so far) biggest revolt of October 28th (anniversary of the liberation from the Hapsburgs), when particularly the students of Prague University and the workers in the Kladno and Pilsen factories showed their mettle and suffered terrible casualties. How strong, concerted and nation-wide Czech resistance is even in this early stage of the struggle can easily be gauged from the enormous number of armed forces (principally Gestapo) which the Nazis require to sustain their reign of terror. At one time there were over a hundred thousand in Prague alone.

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Gestapo, alas, have ways and means of making their own catches.

It should be added that the first of the sabotage cases mentioned, being a clear case of wrecking, must have been an individual effort, inasmuch as the organized opposition movement in Germany strongly disapproves of wrecking and other forms of terrorism; its approved forms of resistance and opposition being now organized as widely as possible, were formulated early in the war as the following "Ten Commandments":

1. Slow down work. Organize strikes and, if need be, sabotage. When conscripted for the Army, do not shoot.
2. Join forces with all enemies of Nazidom to fight Hitler and his helpmates Göring, Hess, Krupp, Thyssen, etc. Only the unity of workers and peasants can lead to victory.
3. Use every opportunity to spread the truth about the abominable crimes of Hitlerism. Speak about it, put it on slips of paper, spread those wherever you can.
4. Do not believe Hitler's lies. Do not trust Nazi papers. Do not believe one word of what the Nazi radio says.
5. Do not let yourself be robbed. Your rates and taxes go into the pockets of the Nazi bosses and war profiteers. Shirk payment. Withdraw your money from savings banks.
6. Do not fall for the Nazi distinctions of race and creed. In the Third Reich there are only two kinds of people: those that fill their pockets without working, and those who are hunted and oppressed by the regime. The latter are your friends.
7. Help victims of the Nazis wherever you can. The women whose husbands are in concentration camps, the children whose parents have been murdered by Hitler, need your sympathy and help.
8. Conduct the fight against Hitler methodically and systematically. Associate with no one whom you have not carefully tested; but join him when you are sure he fights against Hitler.
9. Help to unmask Hitler's spies and stoolpigeons. Be watch-



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ful and distrustful. Beware of false friends, they always come in new guise. Having discovered a spy make his name known to all friends.

10. You must and shall fight against Hitler with every ounce of your strength. He has exiled the flower of German culture. He has gaoled the flower of the German working class. He has enslaved the flower of German peasantry. He now leads all to death. Peace for the German people, death to the Hitler regime.

These "Ten Commandments" were circulated through various underground channels early in the war, and were broadcast every night by the *Deutscher Freiheits-Sender*.

In a previous chapter the pre-war activities of this "Freedom-Station" were recorded; since the war it has, of course, become world-famous through its stirring appeals to the German people, particularly during the first few weeks of the war. Mention must here be made that ever since October a contemptible hoax is being played on a trusting world-audience by a group of individuals who, operating from abroad and devoid of real contact with the German people, appropriated the name of the *Freiheits-Sender* in a frequently repeated attempt to sponge on the moral capital and world-wide fame earned by the real "Freedom Station" in thirty months of death-defying work within the Gestapo-ridden Reich. The real *Freiheits-Sender* does, of course, continue its work whenever given a chance by the *real* hazards with which it has to contend (unlike the spurious transmitter which is as safe from the Gestapo as Westminster or Notre-Dame). Nor can the impostor do much harm so far as German listeners are concerned, for they can generally and with rapidity distinguish the genuine from the spurious transmitter. Obviously this cannot be so easy for the millions of foreign listeners who are confused or deceived by the similarity of wavelength and the impostor's careful imitations.

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To this, a painful subject, we shall unfortunately have to revert in an even more sinister context. For the moment we will quote from but one of the real "Freedom Station's" early war broadcasts, the quotation selected being an appeal to the people of Berlin from the workers of a Berlin armaments factory:

This war is not a just war, not a patriotic war, nor a war of liberation. It is an unjust war. It is not a just war because it is not a war for the honour and liberty of our people, but for the suppression of other peoples, and for the conquest of foreign territories. . . . It is not true that the attainment of the war aims of the Hitler Government will bring an improvement in the living conditions of the German people. Hitler has conquered Austria and he has subjected Czechoslovakia, but conditions for you have not improved; on the contrary, they have become worse. For you, German workers, peasants and tradesmen, the conquest and subjection of other countries has only brought new burdens, new sacrifices, new taxes. On the day on which Hitler marched into Prague the working-day of the German miners was lengthened. Germany is bigger, but the German people are poorer. No, an imperialist war can never be in the interest of the people! It is in the interest of the people to fight against this war, to overthrow those responsible for it and to bring about peace. Working people of Berlin! Do not be duped! You must realize the true character of this war and then the veil of deception will fall and truth will be revealed. . . . To-day is different from 1914. Then the majority of German labour leaders besmirched the banner of the German labour movement through their policy of supporting the warmongers. . . . To-day it is impossible to imagine German workers deserting to Hitler. Down with Hitler! Let us all join in the fight of the German people for peace and freedom! . . .

Only a united working class can fight this battle. Follow the example of our group in which Trade Unionists, Social-Democrats and Communists have joined forces. Nothing can break our unity, nobody can dupe us. Join hands in the factories,

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make contacts with other shops in your factories and with other factories, as we have done!

Go to the peasants in the country and to the tradesmen and small shopkeepers in the towns. Help the peasants and the urban middle class in their fight for existence!

German soldiers, make every preparation for the hour when you will turn your guns around. The enemy is in our own country! The overthrow of those who have caused this war—this is the task of the German people!

German women, yours is a foremost place in our fight. You must act as you did at the end of the last war; then this war will not last four years! Put up your strongest resistance to ~~this~~ war and the war criminals!

German Youth, do not be deceived by chauvinist propaganda! Ask your elders how they ended the war and overthrew the Government in 1918! This is your task, this is your privilege!

All of you! Unite! Write on the walls, whisper to your friends: "For Peace and Freedom and Bread! Down with the warmongers! Down with Hitler!"

The most significant point of this appeal is that it was signed by Trade-Unionists, Social-Democrats and Communists alike, a case of unity due to the patient groundwork done in the preceding years; without it, such unity and, indeed, the survival of any active opposition would have been impossible; it is most important to note that while the political differences between the two socialist and other parties are still far from overcome, the rank and file within the country has reached a very considerably larger degree of unity than their party-leaders, particularly those in exile. Within the Reich, right under the yoke of Ley's Labour-Front and Himmler's Gestapo, it was common need and common danger that welded unity, and whatever political grudge the Communists might have nursed against Social Democrats (and vice-versa) was forgotten by those who saw each other's courage and tenacity put to the test in the

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underground struggle and in the Gestapo's torture cells, and who would welcome any opportunity of arguing out their differences, either in the factories or in whatever time and privacy the severe discipline of a concentration camp would grant them. It was this spirit, this feeling for the bitter need of unity that produced many appeals like the one quoted.

On the practical effects of such propaganda there is some grim evidence in such scanty reports as the Nazi Press from time to time publishes of a tiny fraction of the executions carried out. On November 1st the worker Paul Witte was executed; in passing sentence the Judge gave as sole reason "incitation to strike." On the same day Robert Klein, a peasant, was shot for having refused to give up his harvest to Nazi authorities. Joseph Dickmann was shot for conscientious objection (on religious grounds) to war service. Along with him two others were executed for sabotage. A day or two later two Hamburg dockyard workers were sentenced by a Military Court for "Labour Desertion" and shot; they had refused to comply with orders of the "German Labour Front" to take up work in an armaments factory. All this (a very incomplete list, alas!) within less than a week. But there is also a great deal of less tragic evidence from such scanty reports as do penetrate the strict frontier control of the Gestapo through various "illegal" channels. Trouble at the Berlin Siemens plant over a great number of secret leaflets calling for systematic whispering propaganda against the war and the regime and for slowing down work; similar trouble at the Hamburg shipyard of Blohm & Voss; widespread distribution of leaflets in Chernnitz; an anti-war demonstration (finally squashed by the Gestapo) in the *Neue Welt*, one of the largest assembly halls in one of Berlin's working-class districts; and everywhere women grumbling (and often

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openly protesting) against scarcity and high food-prices and the long hours wasted in queues. One of the most remarkable cases occurred late in October, in the Baden district of Lörrach, where crowds of women staged a noisy demonstration before the empty butcher's shops, until the Gestapo came, filled several lorries with enraged women and made them clean out the public baths by way of punishment. Similar demonstrations took place at Cologne, where the population was particularly incensed on account of the overbearing manner of Herr Grohé, the local Nazi district leader; there must have been some concerted action behind the fact that, simultaneously and all over town, Grohé's photo, cut from the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* (Cologne's official Nazi organ), was pasted up in factories and public places with the following (type-written) caption:

*Ein Volk, ein Führer und ein Reich.  
Vor dem Gesetz ist jeder gleich.  
Es hungert Grohé unverdrossen  
Als Vorbild für die Volksgenossen.*

One people, one Führer and one Reich.  
Before the law we're all alike.  
Untiringly Grohé stints his bulk,  
A model for us simple folk.

In Berlin, at about the same time, there was considerable excitement on account of the fantastic rumour that, in the Danziger-Strasse Infirmary the Nazis had killed most of the old men, so as to save their food. The factual basis of the rumour seems to have been the announcement that, from October 3rd to 9th, as many as thirty-eight of the old men died; moreover, it was said that after October 20th there were only twelve inmates left of the 137 in the Infirmary at the outbreak of war. Whatever the truth of this

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rumour—personally I feel rather inclined to disbelieve it—the very fact that such a rumour was whispered around and credited seems most significant evidence of the considerable nervous tension of that particular time, as well as of the fact that there appear to be no limits to what the people are prepared for from the Nazis.

It should be remembered that most of the cases just mentioned occurred towards the end of October. The Polish campaign had been over (and forgotten) for some weeks, Hitler's "peace offensive" had been launched and failed, there was deadlock at the front, at sea and in the air; there was nervous tension all round; something had to happen, something drastic, and soon. Something did happen: the Munich "bomb outrage."

The facts of the event will still be in the reader's memory: on the evening of November 8th, in the Munich *Bürgerbräu-Keller*, some twenty minutes after a speech of Hitler's in the most intimate circle of his oldest henchmen, a time bomb exploded, killing a waiter or two and a few minor Party officials—very minor ones, because Hitler himself, his personal *entourage* and practically every one of the more prominent guests had left immediately after the speech. The speech had been remarkably short, in fact almost an hour shorter than customary on that annual occasion, the anniversary of the abortive "Beer Hall Putsch," that took place in the same *Bürgerbräu* in 1923. While the shortness of the speech was very unusual it was even more unusual that Hitler and the other Party celebrities left immediately, a thing they had never done before; in fact, it had been an unbroken tradition for them, on the occasion of that anniversary, to stay until the early hours of the morning. This time they did not linger even for five minutes, and were actually on their way out of Munich twenty minutes later when the bomb exploded. Whoever likes his evidence

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more subtle might recall that during the last fifteen or twenty minutes of his speech Hitler, as often as eight times, used the word *Vorsehung* in the sense of the "divine providence" protecting his life and his work, and that exactly the same word, next morning, figured on Göbbels' ~~every~~ front-page, dripping with effusive thankfulness that the Führer's life had been spared from the world's foulest crime, devised by the world's most sinister blackguard, a British Secret Service agent, most likely with a Freemason for a father and a Jewess for a mother, and almost certainly a distant relation of Winston Churchill's. This is not meant as a joke; it is merely a synthesis of various individual accusations professed to be taken with utter seriousness in the Nazi Press and Radio. Nor did it take them any time to discover it all; they knew it on the very night of the outrage, just as, with the Reichstag still ablaze and the pitiable van der Lubbe not yet produced, it was "known for certain" that the Communists had laid the fire as a "beacon" for world revolution. At that time it was a matter of a beacon, this time it was a matter of providence; the words had changed, the issues were different, but the technique had remained the same. The issues were at least similar: the Reichstag fire was to be the means for whipping up public opinion against the left-wing Opposition (with the principal object of gaoling as much of the latter as possible); the bomb outrage was to be the means for whipping up public opinion against Britain (and, incidentally, strengthening the Führer's position by attempting to play on the people's feeling for one miraculously saved by providence from a dastardly assassination). This, indeed, was exactly the line adopted by Nazi propaganda; but it did not show the desired result; it was, in fact, almost a complete failure, so much so that after many weeks' preparation (and, no doubt, after much ingenuity

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spent in faking "evidence") the Nazis, on second thoughts, decided to cancel their "Monster Trial," and their plans "to put Britain in the dock." They seem to have had enough of one Reichstag trial and wisely decided not to risk such a boomerang again.

Mention should be made of another much-discussed theory of the "outrage": that it was a genuine attempt on Hitler's life, staged by Göring and other powerful groups on the assumption that, with the hopelessly compromised figure of Hitler out of the way, the Western Powers would be prepared to come to terms with an otherwise still Nazi or semi-Nazi Reich—an interesting theory, but one that seems incompatible with the factual logic of events during the night of the attempt.

However, one thing is quite certain: that bomb outrage must have been an "inside job"; it must have been staged by people high up in the hierarchy (and, in fact, with the connivance of the Gestapo), for the simple reason that otherwise no access could have been possible to that Holy of Holies, the *Bürgerbräu-Keller*, during anniversary week. As to the German Opposition, not even the Nazis thought of accusing them of the bomb outrage; this time it was the British they were after.

While condemning murder and any form of political terrorism on principle, the German Opposition would not even welcome an outsider's or a madman's attempt on Hitler's life; it would indeed be considered a calamity, even if Hitler, before the downfall of his regime, should happen to succumb to an attack of appendicitis or pneumonia, if for no other reason than that, later, there would always be some fools to say: "Ah, if only the Führer had lived, everything would have been different." But a successful attempt on his life would be even worse, because it might easily make of him a martyr. That is why even his own



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bodyguard could not tremble for the Führer's life more earnestly than the genuine German oppositionist who realizes full well that, to root out the last remnant of Hitlerism, it will be essential to put Hitler himself in the dock (with the others) in a fair trial, when he will have to answer to the German people for all his known crimes, from the murders down to the petty offence of having unlawfully assumed the Iron Cross of the First Class to which he is not entitled, since he never earned it during his oddly obscure and insignificant career in the World War.

It has been said before that not even the Nazis, at first, thought of accusing the German Opposition of complicity in that self-staged bomb-outrage. All the more confusion was caused (abroad rather than in Germany) when on the day after the outrage the *spurious* "*Freiheits-Sender*" came out with a triumphant if somewhat flippant announcement on the lines of "Our first shot has missed; just wait for the next one, which will surely hit its mark." Truly an amazing situation: for while the proverb treats none too kindly the person who adorns himself with borrowed plumage, this seems to be the first case in history of someone trying to adorn himself with borrowed bombs. If this were merely a case of personal vainglory not a word would need to be wasted on it here; its wider implications unfortunately make its discussion necessary. While it seems despicable enough for someone to assume the "credit" for something he has not done and which if he *had* done it would not merely be a dastardly crime but the very extreme of stupidity, the essential point was the reaction of the Nazis for whom that fake "confession" obviously was a godsend of which they were not slow to take advantage. "There, you see," they screamed over their front pages and over the radio; "they are admitting it themselves! Émigré traitors are the culprits! Otto Strasser is the self-confessed hirer of the assassin, and

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since he finds open doors at the Quai d'Orsay and in Downing Street, this is clear and self-confessed proof of the Allied Governments' complicity in murder!"

These were the wide and unpleasant results of what otherwise might have been a mere show of vainglory by some impostor with a radio-transmitter at his disposal; as it was, it involved the Allied Governments in undeserved unpleasantness and gave a cheap (though short-lived) triumph to the Nazis, who thus did get exactly what they sought from their self-staged "outrage."

As to Herr Strasser,<sup>1</sup> it was indeed his name that was first mentioned in the world's Press (*before* the Nazis took it up) in connection with the spurious transmitter's idle boast. Let it be assumed for the sake of Herr Strasser's honour that the mention of his name in connection with the radio hoax was due to an error of the newspapers concerned; anyway, when a few days later the Nazis produced a certain Elser, a poor creature picked from one of their concentration camps with a view to being made the van der Lubbe of the new "Monster Trial" (which will not now take place), Strasser came out with a public statement: "Elser is not one of my men."

Since all that political damage (discrediting the genuine German Opposition) was mainly due to the world-wide publicity given to the radio hoax, it should be added that the vast majority of the newspapers which fell for it did so unwittingly, unaware of the spuriousness of the trans-

<sup>1</sup> Merely for the sake of historical accuracy it should be mentioned that early in the war Herr Strasser and Herr Rauschnig, at Zürich, joined forces in the formation of what they called the "German National Council." Since both protagonists of that union are ex-members of the Nazi Party, they might well have within the Reich some following of equally disgruntled Party-members. But, again for the sake of accuracy, it should be added that even within the Party these "Black Front" adherents are a tiny minority, and that there are none at all among the masses.

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mitter and the mendacity of its statements and using them simply because they were "good copy." Just so, in December, another hoax reached the front-pages; newspaper readers may remember it; a "last warning to Hitler—we give you exactly one hundred days; should you have failed to abdicate by then you may, forthwith, expect the death penalty to which you are herewith sentenced." The reader may be assured that the real German Opposition is doing its work on rather less melodramatic lines, and that the real *Deutscher Freiheits-Sender* (unlike the spurious one) does not aspire to be taken either as a prophet or as a hangman; the real *Freiheits-Sender* (unlike the spurious one) is far too busy maintaining its contacts with the everyday concerns and worries of the people (and with dodging the Gestapo) to have much time left for such flights of fancy.

It may well be asked: who are the people behind that spurious transmitter, and why are they doing it? They are a number of émigrés gifted with more ambition than scruple and animated by the hope of one day entering Berlin with French bayonets to clear a way to high office in the Wilhelm-Strasse. It should at once be added that it is neither the object of this book nor the intention of the author to sit in judgment on the ethical issues or on the personal motives guiding these "patriots"; and since they have hardly any contacts, and certainly no following among the German people, a book dealing with that people's struggle against Hitler might well ignore the unsavoury topic, but that it had received such publicity as to cause world-wide confusion and, what is worse, to bring discredit and harm to the German people.

Evidence of this has come almost daily throughout November and December; take the London *Daily Express* of December 2nd:

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Otto Strasser, ex-Nazi, Leader of the Black front which is pledged to "get" Hitler, said in Paris yesterday that the Allies' broadcasts to Germany are on the wrong track. "Give them the Hitler style," he said, "like this: Germans, all the world hates you. Every nation is thirsting for your blood. Hitler has made you the world's lepers. Awake and overthrow this despot. Otherwise your homes are doomed. Britain and France are invincible."

As for the *Daily Express*, it merely did its duty as a newspaper by printing a report of undeniable news value. As for Herr Strasser, for his own sake one can but utter the charitable hope that the French interviewer might have misunderstood him. But, rightly or wrongly quoted, this is the perfect grist for Gobbels' mill, a godsend for Hitler's "chauvinistic" propaganda; it matters little that those responsible for the Allies' foreign broadcasts are wise enough to disdain such poor advice—the damage is already done. "Every nation is thirsting for your blood—your homes are doomed"—what more could Hitler want in support of his brazen claim to be defending the Reich against a world of envious enemies? what better chance for his last desperate attempt to save himself and his foul regime by whipping the people into a frenzy of righteous indignation and honest conviction that they have to fight for their very lives and homes and to save their country from being carved up? This, ever since November, has been consistently the Nazi line; a very shrewd line for them, a very dangerous line for everybody else, particularly the German people.

Meanwhile, all over Europe, at least half-a-dozen different patent solutions are being cooked with regard to Hitler's succession, and all sorts of émigré groups (including some princes and ex-royalty) are hustling from one conference to the other in preparation for the arduous task of "taking

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over," once the satisfactory mode of carving up the country has been arranged, and provided French and British bayonets have first done the carving.

Let us waste no word on the moral aspect of these various schemes; let us simply ask: are they practicable? They are not. They would merely play into Hitler's hand by creating what has not happened since August 1914: a united German people, united against alleged aggression from the French and British people. Carthage could be destroyed. Germany cannot be. It happens to be too big. The vicious circle would start all over again.

Actually, there is no patent solution of the German problem; that problem can be solved by one alone: the German people. That means the German peasants and workers, the middle-classes and the large number of intellectuals belonging to them or sympathizing with them. If the problem is to be really solved, if the cure is to be effective, the German people must be left to seek its own salvation. No one can save Germany from Nazism, no one can liberate the Germans from Hitler, except the German people. Its riddance must be self-begotten to be effective.

To such good riddance the German people was well on the way when Hitler tried to save himself through war. It was his last chance, and it does indeed render the people's task of liberation immeasurably more difficult. But the task will be done.

Who will lead it? Will it, by any chance, be the Reichswehr? A question often heard (outside the Reich); but those who ask it are overlooking the fact that the Reichswehr is an instrument rather than a driving force; that, with all its political aspirations and influence, it has never yet shown political initiative; that, through all its twenty years' history, it has never sought to rule but always sought

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to suit the rulers to its own purpose; that, in many ways, the Nazis have suited its purpose better than any Government before them; that its opposition to the Nazis, though quite considerable at times, was always on personal grounds only, on grounds of methods and manners, but never on fundamentals.

But would not—it is often asked—the Reichswehr support some counter-revolution, imperial, royal or otherwise, from the Right? In suitable circumstances it probably would, and it should be added that the term “Reichswehr” was meant to stand for its Officer Corps. The qualification is essential in the present context, since the Army proper, particularly on a war footing, is synonymous with the people; and the masses, once rid of Nazidom, will never stand for a second brew of the same dish even if it should be slightly less distasteful and more nicely served. I will not say that no efforts will be made to serve such a dish to the much suffering German people; but the Germans will not swallow it or at least (to kill the unpleasant metaphor) they will not keep it down.

A purpose even less permanent would be served by any attempt at salvation from outside. To put it bluntly: you cannot make Germany safe for Democracy by marching the French Army into Cologne; nor could you make the Germans go Bolshevik by marching the Red Army into Breslau. You cannot cure sore flesh by pounding and massaging it. You must give it a chance to heal from inside and grow fresh skin; its *own* skin!

What exactly the new skin of Germany will look like no one can tell; except that it will have to be her own skin, and new. Just as, after the last war, 1913 came never back again, just so, after this one, there will be no more 1939 or 1933 or 1918 or anything earlier for that matter. It will be some time in the forties, quite early in the forties, maybe.

## THE WAR

And, with or without a federated Europe (whatever that might ultimately look like), it will be a very different Germany. But first of all the German people will have to get rid of Hitler.

Why then don't they do it, why don't they turn the guns round and make an end of it? The answer to this is that it is easier said than done. The Czech people has been trying to do it for a long time, a people fanatically united against Hitlerism, and they have not succeeded yet. But they will succeed. They will be free again. And so will the German people. Nor will it ever again suffer to be made a menace to any other people once it has won that struggle for its own liberty as well as the right to shape its own destiny.

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# Casualty List

*No window was smashed and hardly a drop of blood spilled by our German revolution . . . our triumph is not marred by a single opponent slain by us.*—From two Hitler speeches.

This is no book on Nazi terror. There are many such books and pamphlets,<sup>1</sup> full of authenticated facts and unquestionable documentary evidence.

In this book we have dealt with the fight for freedom and its prospects rather than the casualties and the suffering, and just as a war-historian in describing strategic and tactical aims and the fortunes of battle can barely mention the number of casualties and pay a passing tribute to acts of individual heroism, just so have we had to emulate the active fighters for Germany's freedom by thinking of their living rather than their dead.

Yet, what little space we can give the victims is necessary to help the reader fully to understand the atmosphere in which the fight is being waged. Every one of the men and women actively engaged in that fight knows that at every moment of every day and night he (or she) risks the fate of the thousands who have been slain, and the hundreds of thousands who have been tortured in captivity.

Nor is that list by any means complete: every day, every hour in which this book was written and printed, adds to the fearful toll.

There are no complete statistics available, and even such

<sup>1</sup> For details, see the bibliography at the end of this volume.



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authenticated figures as have been compiled for certain periods and certain sections do not claim to be anywhere near the true total. There is one fairly comprehensive list available, covering roughly the first four years of the regime<sup>1</sup> and including victims from all strata of the people, even a few dozen Nazis. But since the latter are invariably those who had become genuine oppositionists, the list is incomplete at least so far as that it omits upwards of a thousand real Nazis slain on or about June 30, 1934. Restricted to genuine oppositionists, the list gives authenticated data of 176 gaol sentences upwards of ten years (mostly life-sentences) and of 1,392 slain, and, since only a few hundred of these were "legally" beheaded, this means that more than a thousand were either "shot while trying to escape" or forced to commit suicide or murdered in some other way. Shortage of space permits us to list only a few very typical or significant cases, selected and grouped either according to the motive of the murder or the form of its execution:

*Heinrich Dosenbach*, shot at Karlsruhe on October 25, 1933, because he had been found in possession of five copies of the *Braunbuch über Reichstagsbrand und Hitler Terror*. . . .

*Karl Schmidt*, arrested at Frankfort in November, 1936, for having organized a collection on behalf of the Spanish Republicans. Subsequently shot by the Gestapo. . . .

*Karl Fischer* (a former S.A. man) taken to Sachsenburg concentration camp and there murdered on December 27, 1935, for having been found reading anti-Nazi literature. . . .

*Franz Reyersbach*, of Oldenburg, in December, 1936, showed a friend a cutting from the London *Times* relating to the Third Reich and commented on it. He was reported, taken to Sachsenburg concentration camp and there "suicided."

*Fritz von Zabiensky*, having escaped from the Gestapo in 1933,

<sup>1</sup> This list was closed in February 1937.

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was re-arrested in April 1935 and thrown from a window of the Duisburg Police Station. . . .

*Albert Funk* of Essen, a former member of the Reichstag, was thrown out of a window of the Recklinghausen Police Station on April 27, 1933. . . .

*Karl Müller* of Wiesbaden, on August 28, 1933, was thrown from a second-floor window by two S.S. men named Kraus and Kühne. . . .

*Hans Martin* of 8, Höfe Strasse, Cologne, on September 25, 1933, was thrown to his death from a window of the police station. . . .

*Paul Küpler*, on September 30, 1934, slain at Düsseldorf and then thrown from a window. . . .

*Margarete Walter* of Berlin, in October 1935, tortured in the Gestapo prison in the Prinz Albrecht Strasse, Berlin, and then thrown from a window.

*Rudolf Hensel*, of Berlin, aged 24, thrown from a moving express train by S.A. men in March 1933. . . .

*Adolf Biedermann*, Hamburg, former Social Democratic member of the Reichstag, murdered in a train by S.A. men on May 11, 1933.

*A Berlin police officer* (name unknown) slain by S.S. men on March 18, 1933, for refusing to maltreat prisoners. . . .

*Fritz Debus*, of Frankfurt, arrested (for the second time) at Easter 1936 and tortured to death because he refused to betray his comrades.

*Deichsler*, of Bremen, arrested in September 1935 for derogatory remarks concerning Julius Streicher's *Stürmer*. Alleged to have hanged himself in prison. . . .

*Schäck*, of 15, Erasmus Strasse, Düsseldorf, a high official, voiced his indignation over the "morality trials"<sup>1</sup> staged against the Catholics. He was arrested in July 1936 and murdered the same day.

*Alfred Rosenbaum*, a Jewish refugee who had returned home to Würzburg, was arrested in May 1935, taken to Nuremberg and there murdered by the Gestapo.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 151 *seq.* •

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*Alfred Elker*, a pure "Aryan" of Leipzig, was slain by the Gestapo on April 19, 1933, because they thought he looked like a Jew.

Many of those sentenced to death or murdered during the first four years were women, apart from 16 women sentenced to ten years of imprisonment or more, and 274\* to gaol sentences up to and including nine years—all, of course, for political reasons. The figures relate to the period prior to the spring of 1937 only. For the remaining part of that year, no exact figures are available.

In 1938, up to October 5th, there were 25 death sentences (including three women) for political reasons and 42 authenticated cases of murder on the part of the Gestapo. But this does not include Austria, where the murders and suicides (particularly among the Jews) soon ran into thousands, to say nothing of arrests which, as early as June (three months after the "*Anschluss*") were estimated at 70,000. When we add the fearful toll of "private scores settled" in Sudetenland, as well as the death-roll during the Jew pogroms in November, the total of deaths for 1938 should be very near ten thousand.

The year 1939 was certainly worse; it began ominously enough with an average of more than three death sentences each week during the first two months, and what with repeated trouble in Czechoslovakia as well as in the Tyrol and, after the beginning of war, new mass arrests and mass-murders in concentration camps, there is no way of even approximately computing the grim total.

Nor are there any exact figures (except in the secret files of the Gestapo) on the number of those in concentration camps. While it seems to be a fairly reliable estimate to put the figure of those who have either passed through or remain in a concentration camp at well over a quarter of

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a million, the figure of those actually *in* camp, even before the war, could not have been much below 200,000; for large camps like Buchenwald, Dachau or Sachsenburg each have a capacity of 10,000 to 20,000, and many new camps have been opened in Austria and Czechoslovakia (lately, also, in Poland).

Since the inception of the Third Reich hardly a week has passed without at least one political prisoner perishing by what Göring once called "the good old German custom of the *axe*." Some letters to their families and the memory of them is all that remains to us. Here is a letter written by August Lütgens, a sailor, on the night before his execution:

ALTONA, GERICHTS STRASSE 2.

*July 31, 1933.*

DEAR CHILDREN,

When you get this letter your Dad won't be here any more. He will have been done away with, according to his sentence. So we shall not see each other any more. But when you are bigger and when you have learned some more, you will understand what your Dad was and what he fought and died for, and then you will understand why your Dad had to act as he did and couldn't do otherwise. Farewell now, and become fighters, all of you!

Love from

YOUR DAD.

Dear Lisa, you must not be downhearted. Farewell, mother, August, Herbert, Herta and Reinhold.

Yours

AUGUST.

This man Lütgens was sentenced on a trumped-up charge of participating in a "pub" brawl between Socialists and Nazis, many years earlier. He was executed on August 1,

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1933, with three others convicted of no more than anti-Nazi propaganda. One of these men was Bruno Tesch, whose trial and sentence were due entirely to the personal spite of a high Nazi official whose friend had been wounded in the brawl in which Bruno Tesch was alleged to have participated. That Nazi official was one of those privileged to attend the execution, the circumstances of which are attested by two prison wardens who were present and who subsequently emigrated. These are the facts.

Immediately after August Lütgens' execution, Tesch was led to the block still dripping with Lütgens' blood. Close at hand was a priest and the Nazi official already mentioned. Tesch refused to have his eyes bandaged. The priest asked him if he had one last wish. Yes, said Tesch: he would like for the last time to be rid of his handcuffs; he would like for the last time to stretch himself to his heart's content. On the priest's plea the wish was granted. The executioner meanwhile sharpened his axe. The official grinned. As soon as Tesch, a giant of a man, had his hands free he took a deep breath and began to stretch. Breathing again, he stretched his arms even higher; then suddenly he smashed his clenched fist into the grinning face beside him. The official fell, bleeding profusely. After a few seconds of utter consternation Tesch was grasped by the guards; a few seconds more, and his severed head rolled on the ground.

Another execution of which eyewitness evidence happens to be available is that of six young oppositionists, Wilms, Hamacher, Wäser, Horsch, Moritz and Engel, beheaded in Cologne on November 30, 1933. This is the report of the old prison warden who, on official duty, had to see it:

The first three went off all right. But with the fourth the executioner made a bloomer. To steel himself for his task he had taken some brandy and, maybe, he had taken too much.

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What happened was that the axe slipped and stuck in the skull of the sentenced man, who was still alive. The second stroke wouldn't do either, and only the third severed the head.—All those present were terribly excited, and some were very indignant. When the fifth man came along, the executioner seemed to have lost his nerve, and again the first stroke went awry and failed to kill. Number six was the window-cleaner, Joseph Engel. By now the executioner had regained his nerve; he accomplished this one with one terrific stroke. To witness the execution of those six men was my most terrible experience in all my many years of service.

To conclude this list of casualties—which continues to lengthen day by day, night by night, almost hour by hour—let us choose at random one more case of “legal” execution, after a “trial” which gave the prisoner no chance even to state his case, let alone to defend himself: the case of Ludwig Büchler, a young Darmstadt stone-cutter, beheaded on August 26, 1933. It is a simple (and typical) case, and most of the evidence we have concerning it comes from Nazi sources. On the last Sunday in February (the day before the Reichstag fire), Büchler, with his father and brother-in-law, pottering in their garden, were attacked by half a dozen armed Nazis, the majority of them in S.A. uniform. When one of them had shot out an eye of Büchler's brother-in-law and then, at the point of the revolver, attacked Büchler himself, he used his gardening knife in self-defence and happened to injure the Storm-trooper's carotid artery. The man died five weeks later, and the charge against Büchler was murder.

Here is what the Darmstadt Nazi paper reported of the sentenced man's end:

On the way from the cell to the block and all through the reading and execution of the sentence, Büchler's calm and composure was such as has probably never been shown by a man

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under sentence of death. Even when putting his head on the block he did not show the slightest trace of excitement.

What the Nazi reporter omitted to describe were the sentenced man's very last moments, which are attested by two of the warders who were present: when Ludwig Büchler, a devout Catholic, reached the block he knelt down for a few moments' of silent prayer; then, in a loud but utterly calm voice, just before putting his head to the block, he exclaimed: "Lord forgive them. For they know not what they do!" And as Büchler's head fell, Reichsstatthalter Sprenger, who was attending the execution in his capacity as Nazi Governor of Hesse, shouted "*Heil Hitler!*".

## Culture Driven from the Reich

*Whenever I hear the word culture I release the safety catch of my revolver. . . .*—From the play *Schlageter*, by the Nazi dramatist Hanns Johst.

It might well be said that the very cruelty which the Nazis had to employ to keep themselves in power necessarily sealed their early doom; but against this it has been argued that reports of atrocities might be exaggerations (actually, they are almost invariably understatements) and that, moreover, all this frightful price in blood and misery might weigh little and be forgotten in a few decades if thereby the Nazis succeed in building up a new world order, contributing to the ultimate progress and happiness of mankind. But even their most willing apologists will have to admit the error of such hopes when passing the most superficial glance at what the Nazis have done to Germany as a seat of learning and a temple of the arts, ravages wrought within a few years and, what is worse, deliberately and according to a preconceived plan. This alone, if nothing else, must brand the regime as one unfit to survive more than its few years of hectic strife.

There are yet no comprehensive statistics available as to the depletion of German universities and other scientific institutions by the Nazis; but considering that the number of scientists driven abroad, including those from Austria, Bohemia and Moravia, far exceeds two thousand, the question is rather: how the Nazis could make good the dearth created by this inroad of 30 per cent into the resources



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of learning. Or even, if they tried to make it good at all? To a certain extent they did try, but generally speaking they did not: at Heidelberg, for instance, the 215 professorships of 1932 had decreased to 99 active professorships in 1938, to which might be added some that were kept on the lists (mainly to fake statistics). The place of these latter on the list was quite without meaning inasmuch as the men concerned had been deprived of their salaries as well as practically any opportunity of lecturing or research. Where the Nazis did try to make good the loss of numbers due to the eviction of all those "racially or ideologically undesirable," it was mainly to foster war industry and war technique. Thus, all research in the spheres of the natural and physical sciences was centralized in a *Reichsforschungsrat* (Reich Research Council) under the chairmanship of an artillery general named Becker. Here is a quotation from the first memorandum issued by the Council:

The main task of the *Reichsforschungsrat*, viz. the application of research to urgent problems of the State, will necessitate the direction of research into specified channels, always bearing in mind the suitability of the respective laboratories and scientists for the purpose in hand. Any research work less important at the moment must be postponed and, if need be, laid aside altogether.

Another scientific institute created by the Nazis (within the first few months of their regime) was the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wehrpolitik und Wehrwissenschaften*; it is under the chairmanship of General von Cochenhausen and, as its name implies, it is mainly devoted to military politics and science.

Mention should also be made of the *Deutsche Institut zur Erforschung der Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands* (German Institute for Research on the history of the New Germany);

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this Academy is headed by Cabinet Minister Dr. Frank,<sup>1</sup> who in his opening speech remarked that the object of the Institute was "to become the centre of anti-semitism in science and academic life."

One other branch of research was, of course, dear to the hearts of Nazis: "Racial science." It is all the more significant that the one real expert in that much abused field was also expelled by the Nazis because he objected to their ludicrous theories of "Aryanism"; this was Professor Dr. Saller, a noted anatomist specialized in racial problems and, at one time, a member of the Nazi Party.

Space does not permit us to name more than a few of the thousands of scientists who shared Professor Saller's fate. Albert Einstein was one of the first to be expelled from the Berlin Academy of Science; but merely in the branches of mathematics, physics and chemistry there were several more Nobel Prize winners who went into exile, the most famous of them being James Franck, the physicist, and Fritz Haber, the creator of synthetic nitrogen. He resigned his posts in protest against the dismissal of his Jewish colleagues and collaborators, Freundlich and Polanyi. Haber died in voluntary exile; he was one of the three Board members of the German Chemical Society who left the Reich; the other two, Willstätter and Warburg, being also Nobel Prize winners. To mention but a few of the other professors exiled from the Third Reich (some of them voluntary), there are Friedrich Andreas, the Breslau historian; Gerhard von

<sup>1</sup> "Minister without portfolio," his official status being that of President of the German Law Academy (to which has lately been added the post of supplementing "too gentle" von Neurath in the task of terrorizing the Czech "Protectorate"). Frank was practising law at Munich and was about to be debarred for various shady activities when the advent to power of his Party sent him from disgrace and obscurity straight to the top of his profession. In the meantime, he has at least one authenticated murder on his personal score.

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Beseler, the Kiel jurist; Ernst Diehl, the Halle philologist; Alfred Meusel, the Aachen sociologist; Herman Ranke, the Heidelberg Egyptologist; Herman Oncken and E. Meineke, the Berlin historians; A. Jaspers, the Heidelberg philosopher; Hans Emil Weber, the Münster theologist; and Hans von Wartenberg, who held the professorship of inorganic chemistry at Göttingen.

As to the total of exiled professors, there are some fairly comprehensive statistics prior to 1937, when the staggering figure of 1,875 was reached (many of them voluntary). Apart from medicine, the branches of science most numerously represented were Chemistry (203), Economics (181), Physics (139), Law (121), History of Art (69), Mathematics (67), History (65), Sociology (63), Philosophy (55), Theology (30); as to Philology, when computing the representatives of Classic, English, German, Oriental and Romance languages, we have an aggregate of 127. But a much larger number of émigré professors represent the various branches of medicine, the total reaching 518,<sup>1</sup> the branches most strongly represented being Internal Medicine (94), Neurology, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (61), Bacteriology and Serology (60), Biochemistry (31), Surgery (27), Dermatology (26), Radiology (23) and Gynaecology (22).<sup>2</sup>

To these must be added at least another five hundred professors either killed or exiled when the Nazis established their rule over Austria and, later, Bohemia and Moravia. In Vienna special ravage was wrought in the medical faculty,

<sup>1</sup> Apart from these, thousands of (mostly Jewish) general practitioners and a great number of specialists were forced into exile. Only a relatively small proportion of them have had an opportunity of settling in other countries.

<sup>2</sup> These figures have been compiled by the London *Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland* which kindly granted me access to its archive.

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which alone lost some fifty professors, including Arnold Durig, the physiologist, Heinrich Neumann, the nose-and-ear specialist, and Professor Pötzl, chief of the nerve clinic, who (though "Aryan") was suspended merely because of his devotion to Siegmund Freud. Freud himself of course had to go into exile at the age of 83, where he died a year later. Many Viennese scientists (such as Professor Jagic, formerly physician to the Imperial family) were arrested; even more committed suicide, such as Professor Denk, the surgeon, and Knöpfelmacher, the world-famous child specialist, who had been forced by Nazi hooligans to clean their latrines and to suffer even worse humiliations. Before killing his wife and himself, Professor Knöpfelmacher left this note: "I am reputed to have saved the lives of 60,000 children; now I am forced to take my own."

Apart from eliminating all "suspect" personalities, the Nazis also saw to the immediate *gleichschaltung* of scientific institutes, periodicals, etc. It seems rather significant that the famous *Wiener Klinische Wochenschrift* in its first post-"Anschluss" issue ran an article on "Recent Developments in Gas Warfare"; the author (an imported Nazi) described efforts towards the discovery of what he called a "super-gas" and also "an ideal gas which, odourless as well as invisible, would penetrate every mask-filter and injure skin and breathing organs alike."

The famous Vienna faculty for Romance, what with Professor Ettmayer and all its other representatives being either killed, arrested or dismissed, was completely dissolved, and as to the juridical faculty, several professors were dismissed on "racial" grounds, whilst the Catholic Professor Adamovicz, an eminent jurist and member of the last Schuschnigg cabinet, was among those arrested.

Even worse, relative to its size, were the ravages wrought by the Nazis in the small but eminent University of

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Graz, which in pre-"*Anschluss*" days could boast of as many as three Nobel Prize winners; one of these, Professor Victor Hess, discoverer of cosmic rays, was summarily dismissed; Professor O. Loewy (winner of a Nobel prize for medicine) was arrested; Professor Schrödinger's fate is unknown. The Dean of the University, Professor Dobretsberger, was also arrested, and his predecessor Benndorf, incidentally President of the Institute for Physics, was suspended. The eminent Graz mathematician, Professor Baule, was also among those arrested.

Many of those mentioned are not Jews, and it is indeed a widespread fallacy that an overwhelming majority of the intellectuals maltreated or exiled by the Nazis are Jewish. A large proportion, of course, is Jewish, but certainly less than 50 per cent, apart from those who have committed the crime of marriage with a Jewish woman, or those who possess a Jewish grandmother. Some scientists, perfectly innocent of these "blemishes," have been maltreated and exiled merely because they were known to be devoted to the theories of Einstein or Freud. Yet a great many, not thus compromised and with an impeccable pedigree too, have suffered humiliation and persecution for refusal to give way to the crass imbecilities and perniciousness of Nazi *Weltanschauung*. Of that nothing could be more significant than the elimination of the ancient and famous inscription *Dem lebendigen Geist* at the gate of Heidelberg University and its substitution by *Dem deutschen Geist*—the greatest impertinence, of course, being the use of the very word "German"; what they really meant and should have put was *Dem Nazi Geist*.

Whilst the plight of German scientists has had relatively little publicity, the suppression and expulsion of German writers and artists has, from time to time, roused sufficient world interest to be common knowledge everywhere.

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Practically all the greatest writers in the German language are now in exile: Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Stephan Zweig, Bruno Frank, Bert Brecht, Georg Kaiser, Arnold Zweig, Robert Musil, Leonhard Franck, Max Herman-Neisse, Karl Zuckmayer, Robert Neuman, Oscar Maria Graf, Franz Werfel, Alfred Polgar, Erich Maria Remarque, Ludwig Renn, Alfred Kerr, Vicky Baum, Alfred Neumann, Stefan Lorant, Egon Erwin Kisch, Richard Lewinsohn, Alfred Döblin, Friedrich Wolff, Walter Mehring, Hans Flesch, Peter Mendelsohn, Rom Landau, Siegfried Trebitsch, Felix Salten (to say nothing of Jacob Wassermann, Joseph Roth, Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, dead in exile long before their time). The full list of German literary exiles would occupy greater space than this book would permit. It is sufficient to state, without qualification, that almost the entire personnel of German letters of the first order is beyond the borders of the Third Reich.<sup>1</sup> There could hardly be better proof of this than the fact that the Göbbels-controlled "literature" of the Third Reich, with all its official boosting and support, can hardly sell at home and certainly not abroad. It is no exaggeration to say that the Mann family alone, i.e. Thomas and Heinrich Mann and the former's children Klaus and Erika have, between them, in their seven years of exile sold more of their work in Great Britain, U.S.A., France, Holland, Scandinavia, and elsewhere than all the hundreds of "authors" in Göbbels' *Reichs-Kulturkammer* put together; excepting, of course, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* which has, indeed, been the one and only best-seller that has come out of Germany in recent

<sup>1</sup> A great many of them found refuge in France, and it seems tragically ironic that, "as a war measure against the Nazis," that country's Government has found it expedient to gaol them, even though it is common knowledge that their work and their very lives have ever been in the forefront of the struggle against Nazidom.

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years, though certainly not on literary merit.<sup>1</sup> As to the Nazi-sponsored authors who deserved translation on their own merit, the fingers of one hand are more than enough to count them on. This does not mean to say that every single one of those who can write, shared the (often voluntary) exile of the others; a few stayed at home, and some of them even saved their souls by lapsing into silence; for their own safety they shall not be mentioned here. A few others tried to adapt themselves to the new masters; they shall not be mentioned either, because theirs is punishment enough. By attempting to sell the birthright of their talent they lost it; by trying to avoid the fate of those whose books were burned at the stake, by lowering their own minds to the level of the barbarians who defiled their craft, they destroyed themselves. They may have saved their books from the flames of the hooligans; but they lost the sacred flame that gave them the power to create. They lost their souls and so ceased to be artists.

Nothing would seem then to condemn the Nazi regime so drastically as its stifling and withering effect upon every truly creative spirit. Naturally, this applies to writers more directly than to other artists, some of whom, like Ernst Barlach the great sculptor, could retire into the wilderness, cut themselves off from the present and create for the future. Yet the Nazis hounded Barlach out and he died. Nor can any artist, for any length of time, shut himself away from the world in which he lives, and how could an artist thrive

<sup>1</sup> It is a little known though rather noteworthy fact that within the first eight or nine years after publication, in spite of much boasting from the ever growing Party, Hitler's tome sold a mere twenty-five thousand copies in Germany (and hardly any translation rights); it was only after the author's advent to power that the book's sale in Germany ran into hundreds of thousands and soon into millions, mainly through such "gentle" pressure on local authorities as making the gift of the book compulsory on the occasion of matriculations, weddings, etc.

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in a world dominated by ruffians whose "artistic" leanings are guided by their own Führer's execrable taste. Newspaper readers will remember the disgusting shows which, from time to time, the Nazis would make of themselves by exhibiting to a howling mob of brown-shirts great modern works of art under the stigma "depraved lunacy." Yet they were not above selling such "depravities" to art dealers abroad for as high a price as possible.

As to music in the Reich it is necessary to mention only two facts: Hindemith is in exile, and Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* music is strictly *verboten*. A chapter could be written on the full effects of Nazism on musical life in Germany.

Clemens Holzmeister, the creator of the Salzburg *Festspielhaus*, and two other great German architects, Hugo Gropius and Professor Pölzig, are also in exile. Fritz Busch, the conductor, his brother Adolf the violinist, and Professor Ebert are not the only members of the Glyndebourne company who have turned their backs upon the Third Reich; Max Reinhardt, Albert Bassermann, Ernst Lubitsch, Wilhelm Dieterle, Lotte Lehmann, Conrad Veidt, Elisabeth Bergner, Elsa Brandström, Lucie Mannheim, Berthold Viertel, Fritz Kortner, Oscar Homolka, Victor Barnowsky, Eugen Robert, Heinz Herald, Rudolf Forster, Marlene Dietrich, Richard Tauber, Luise Rainer, Wolfgang Langhoff, Lilli Palmer, Vera Schwarz, Irene Eisinger, Ernst Deutsch, Erich Charell, are but a few of the many German artists now abroad (some in voluntary exile) while their own land is in bondage. But these and the men of learning referred to earlier are keeping the lamp of German culture alight while darkness reigns in their own land. The day will come when the lamp will return to its rightful abode.





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